



Pet fishing

- the dangers of buying kittens online

Adopt,
don't shop!

Buying or adopting a cat or kitten is an exciting time, but it's important to research the person behind the pet. Who is really behind that advert? Have these cats come from a healthy and happy home?

To help the public find pets responsibly the government has launched its Petfished campaign. You may have heard of 'catfishing', when someone creates a fictional online persona to lure a person into a relationship. Deceitful pet sellers will often use a similar tactic to 'petfish' unsuspecting buyers, pretending their animals come from a healthy home, but the reality can be so different. These cats may have grown up in unhealthy, poor-welfare environments, being mistreated leading to severe medical and behavioural problems. Unscrupulous sellers can sell at high volume and make a great deal of money.

This new campaign aims to educate potential kitten and cat owners about the dangers of buying their new feline friend online. The government advises purchasers to always research sellers before getting in touch with them. You can learn how to spot the signs of a deceitful seller, get a step-by-step guide to buying a cat and also learn about adopting instead at getyourpetsafely.campaign.gov.uk There is also a very moving video with real-life stories from people who have bought from deceitful sellers.

Cookie's story

Cookie was brought to Cats Protection after being sold online for £150 at only four weeks old. The owner collected him from the seller in the middle of the street with Cookie already in a carrier. The buyer went on to spend £200 on vets' bills before relinquishing him to our care. Cookie had problems with his eyes when he arrived and was undernourished. Thankfully the vets were able to save his eyes while the centre nursed him back to health and taught him how to be a cat – basic skills he should have learnt from his mother.



Adopt, don't shop!

Cats Protection would always encourage potential cat owners to consider adopting rather than buying a cat or kitten. When adopting from Cats Protection, you'll have the reassurance that your new cat will have had the very best of care and will be vet checked, microchipped and neutered (if old enough) before they go home with you.

But for those who still wish to buy, we strongly advise purchasers to do their homework first. We have teamed up with cat and vet organisations to create a Kitten Checklist, designed to help potential owners to ensure they choose a happy and healthy kitten. The checklist focuses on everything from signs of ill health in a kitten, to understanding their behaviour and even how to determine how comfortable the kitten is around people.

Find our advice at www.cats.org.uk/buying-a-kitten

Lucy's Law comes into effect!

The Petfishing campaign complements Lucy's Law which came into effect from 6 April in England. The law will mean that kittens can no longer be sold by a third-party seller – such as a pet shop or commercial dealer – unless the seller has bred the kittens themselves. Instead, anyone looking to buy or adopt a kitten under six months must either deal directly with the breeder or an animal rehoming centre.

