



# The Time is Meow

## Kitten and cat sales, including online

### Why it matters

For too long, unscrupulous sellers motivated purely by money have been selling kittens which are sick, diseased and too young to be sold. This is especially the case online, where classified sites make it easy and cheap to advertise pets for sale, often with misleading descriptions. Those looking to buy a kitten need to be more aware of these unethical sellers and follow advice to ensure they purchase a healthy cat or kitten.

The problem is made worse by cat breeding, unlike dog breeding, not being regulated. As those selling kittens commercially are also often the breeder, a joined-up approach to dealing with both cat breeding and selling is needed to safeguard the welfare of cats and kittens.

### Current regulations

Cats Protection welcomes The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018, which:

- banned the commercial sale of kittens under eight weeks old
- closed loopholes, ensuring that those running commercial businesses selling kittens from home required a license

These regulations have now been strengthened. From April 2020 the government made it illegal for anyone other than the breeder to commercially sell kittens. This effectively ends the sale of kittens in pet shops and by dealers.



### Adopt, not shop

Cats Protection rehomes around 40,000 cats every year. Across the country the charity has thousands of cats and kittens looking for new homes. While kittens are undoubtedly appealing, older cats are often overlooked but can be a more suitable choice. Kittens need lots of attention and stimulation, whereas older cats are generally calmer and can settle more easily into a busy household.

But there is still more that can be done to protect cats and kittens...



## What the government can do

1. Collaborate with charities like Cats Protection and members of the Pet Advertising Advisory Group (PAAG) to continue to raise awareness of the new laws governing pet sales.
2. Continue to promote widespread use of the expert-approved Kitten Checklist which guides those seeking to purchase a kitten, especially online.
3. To work with local authority licensing teams to review the effectiveness of the new regulations governing pet sales.

Cats Protection worked with other charities and veterinary organisations to create the Kitten Checklist, designed to help those seeking to purchase a kitten. The checklist suggests basic questions to ask of the seller and has a dedicated section for those seeking a pedigree cat.

To view the checklist visit:  
[www.cats.org.uk/buying-a-kitten](http://www.cats.org.uk/buying-a-kitten)

Hannah responded to an online advert for kittens, suggesting they were the offspring of a family pet. But when she arrived at the seller's home, the kitten's mother was nowhere in sight, and Hannah saw up to 15 kittens in one room. Hannah chose two part-pedigree kittens, paying a total of £360 and naming them Simba and Deify.

Within hours of arriving home, Deify became very ill and was admitted to a vet with severe sickness and diarrhoea. Vets confirmed both kittens were younger than eight weeks old and too young to be away from their mum. After receiving critical vet care costing £2,000 Deify did eventually recover but it was a very worrying time for Hannah and her husband.



For further information about our advocacy work visit  
[www.cats.org.uk/timeismeow](http://www.cats.org.uk/timeismeow) or email [advocacy@cats.org.uk](mailto:advocacy@cats.org.uk)