

# CATS Report

**Cats and Their Stats UK 2025**



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## Methodology

For the sixth year, we have commissioned an external and independent agency, Basis Research, to conduct the research contained in the *CATS Report UK 2025*.

An online survey was used to collect information among a nationally representative audience of adults over the age of 18 in the UK, allowing us to estimate the proportion of cat owners in the UK. We also conducted a more detailed survey among cat owners. This was carried out between 25 February 2025 and 26 April 2025. ‘In the last 12 months’ within the report refers to the time period March 2024 to March 2025 and unless otherwise stated, comparative data in this survey uses data from the *CATS Report UK 2024*.

The research consisted of a UK nationally representative sample of 3,521 individuals and a boost of 6,322 cat owners, including regional boosts to ensure accurate representation in these areas. Overall, 10,626 people participated in the study.

## Data presentation

We work with Basis Research to calculate estimates of the cat population annually. Three data sources are used in this calculation:

- nationally representative online survey panel to determine the percentage of UK households who own a cat (n=3,521)
- data from the survey of cat owners on the number of cats owned by each household
- data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on the number of households

Percentages throughout the report are rounded to the nearest whole number. Due to rounding, there will be instances in the report where percentage calculations do not total 100%. Other figures, such as the estimated numbers of cats in the population, are rounded to two significant figures. When calculating cat estimates, we have taken the total estimated cat population figure and multiplied it by the whole percentage, for example 15% of all cats are not registered with a vet, equating to 1.5 million cats. Statistics and population calculations are estimates based on owner-reported responses to the online survey.

Significance testing is undertaken on the data at 99% and 95% confidence intervals. When a finding is referenced as significant within the report it has found to be significant at a 95% confidence interval.

Cat acquisition: Throughout this report we look at recency of cat acquisition, typically looking at all those cats acquired in the last 12 months compared to another time period, for example over a year ago. The data is sourced from the question ‘When did you acquire your cat?’ in the CATS 2025 Research Survey.

Nationally representative sample: The population of interest is the entire population of the UK. The nationally representative sample reflected its structure including gender, age, socio-economic groupings and regions.

More information available upon request from [stats@cats.org.uk](mailto:stats@cats.org.uk)

## Welcome to the 2025 Cats and Their Stats (CATS) Report

We’re delighted to present the sixth edition of the *Cats and Their Stats (CATS) Report*, the UK’s largest annual survey dedicated to understanding the lives of cats and the people who care for them. This year’s findings offer a fascinating snapshot of how cat ownership is evolving, reflecting shifting attitudes, behaviours and societal trends.

As the UK’s leading cat welfare charity, Cats Protection relies on these data to stay ahead of emerging issues and ensure we’re doing the very best for cats and their carers. The insights also help us understand the perspectives of those who don’t currently own cats, allowing us to shape more inclusive and impactful messaging.

This year’s report reveals several notable trends. We’re seeing a rise in cat ownership among younger, more affluent individuals, alongside growing interest in pedigree breeds. More cats are being purchased rather than adopted, placing increased pressure on the rehoming sector, which more often than not continues to work at high capacity to support cats in need.

Social media is playing a bigger role in shaping how younger owners think about and care for their cats. While some social media content

featuring cats can be harmful, it also presents a powerful opportunity to share positive welfare messages. By promoting content that respects and champions feline welfare, we can harness the reach of these platforms to support better understanding and treatment of cats everywhere.

Access to veterinary services remains a concern, with barriers slightly increasing over the past year. Interestingly, cost is no longer among the top three reasons owners cite for avoiding vet visits. This likely reflects the overall trend towards a more affluent cat owner demographic and raises an important question: could it be that some less affluent owners now feel unable to afford cat ownership altogether? With so many unwanted cats in need of homes, we must continue to offer support to those less able to afford cat ownership.

At Cats Protection, we remain committed to working with owners, breeders and veterinary professionals to tackle these challenges and improve the welfare of cats across the UK.

**Kit Sturgess VetMB, PhD, DSAM, FRCVS**  
**Chair of Trustees, Cats Protection**







# Key findings

## State of the nation

- There are 10.2 million owned cats across the UK, a slight fall from 10.6 million in 2024
- Ownership among those aged 35 to 54 has declined
- Cat owners tend to be younger compared to the general population

## The cat market

- Specific breeds of cats make up over 50% of recent acquisitions and now represent 36% of the total cat population
- For cat acquisition, there has been a shift back to using classified sites, but social media continues to play a significant role
- Those acquiring cats tend to be younger, more affluent owners living in urban areas

## Veterinary care

- Neutering numbers are falling as we also see a rise in younger, more affluent pet owners of pedigree cats, many of whom want their cats to have kittens
- More owners are choosing to breed their cat, but more kittens are being given away, rather than sold
- Microchipping numbers have not increased, despite the introduction of compulsory microchipping for pet cats in England in 2024

## Cat care, welfare and behaviour

- Cat owners are researching the needs of their cats more, but younger owners are turning to their vet for advice less often
- Social media and video content are increasingly influential on the knowledge of cat owners
- Fears over cats getting hurt or lost mean owners are choosing to keep their cats indoors

## Companionship and challenges to ownership

- Companionship is still the main reason that people own cats
- The companionship benefits of cats are most keenly felt by those who live alone, and female owners
- Affordability is a leading barrier to cat ownership

Download a sharable PDF of this page at [bit.ly/UK-KeyFindings2025](https://bit.ly/UK-KeyFindings2025)



# State of the nation

## Key takeaways

1

There are 10.2 million owned cats across the UK, a slight fall from 10.6 million in 2024

2

Ownership among those aged 35 to 54 has declined

3

Cat owners tend to be younger compared to the general population

## Cat population

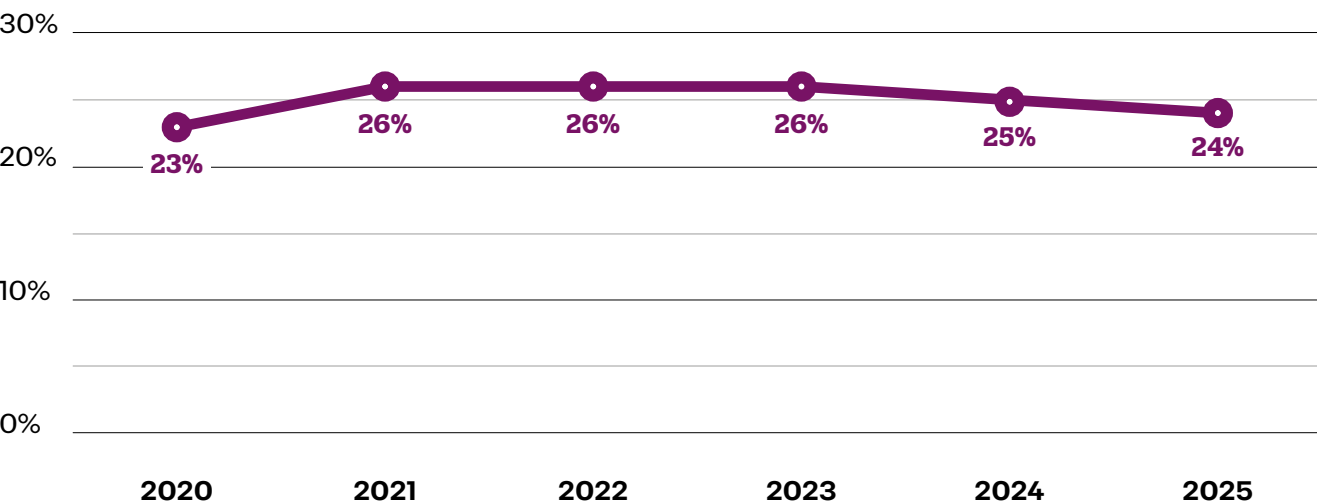
**24%** of households in the UK own a cat.



There are **10.2 million owned cats** across the UK (10.6 million in 2024).

## Proportion of cat owners in the UK

The proportion of households that own a cat has reduced since last year. Although this drop itself is not statistically significant, it continues a declining trend in cat ownership since 2021 seen across most UK regions. Looking at 2020 data though, we may just be experiencing a return to ‘normal’ pre-pandemic ownership figures.

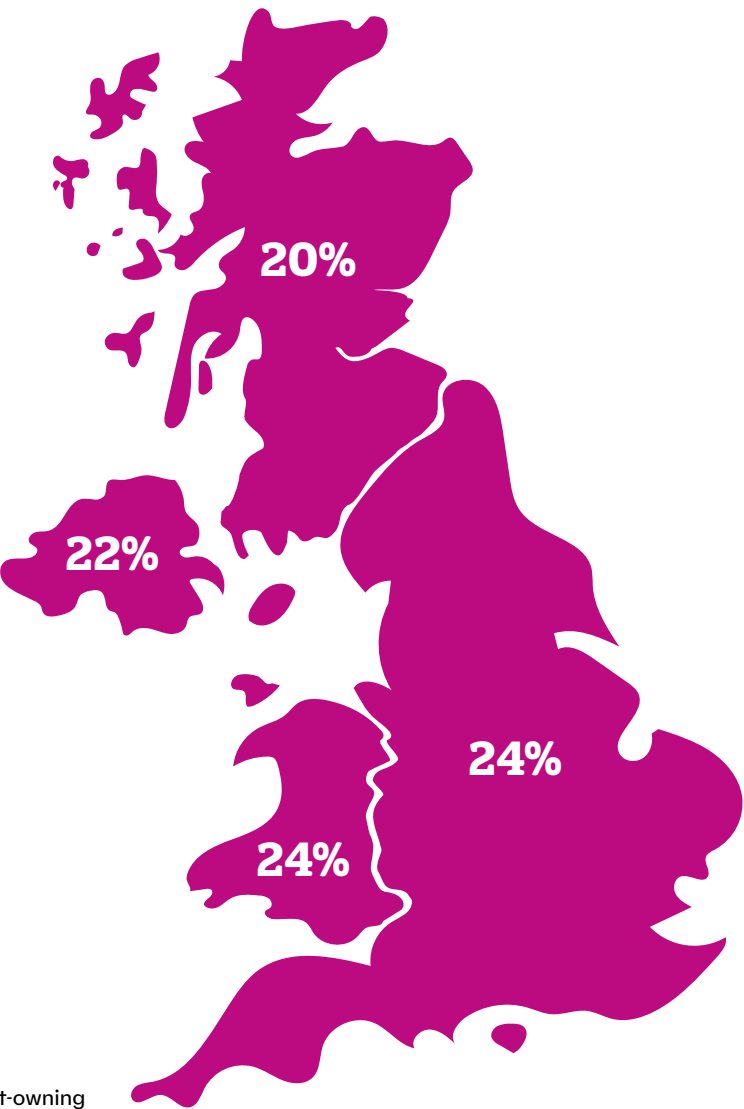


The average number of cats per cat-owning household is 1.5 cats, with 66% of households having one cat and 34% owning two or more cats.



## Household cat ownership across the UK

Cat ownership levels vary across the UK, ranging from 20% of households in Scotland owning one or more cats, to 24% of households in England and Wales, with no statistically significant changes from last year's figures.



The distribution of the owned cat population remains largely the same across the UK\*.

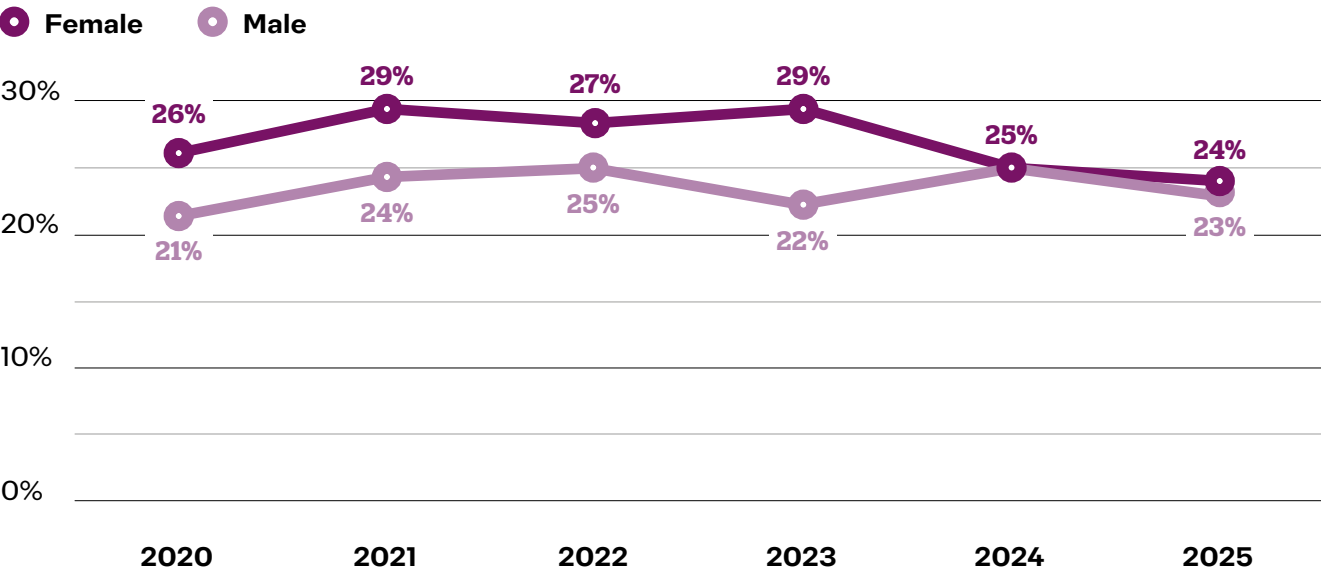
|                          | In millions |      | % of cat-owning households |      |
|--------------------------|-------------|------|----------------------------|------|
|                          | 2024        | 2025 | 2024                       | 2025 |
| Total UK                 | 10.6        | 10.2 | 25%                        | 24%  |
| England                  | 9.0         | 8.5  | 25%                        | 24%  |
| Wales                    | 0.5         | 0.5  | 24%                        | 24%  |
| Scotland                 | 0.8         | 0.7  | 22%                        | 20%  |
| Northern Ireland         | 0.2         | 0.2  | 21%                        | 22%  |
| Greater London           | 1.5         | 1.4  | 31%                        | 28%  |
| South East England       | 1.5         | 1.4  | 26%                        | 25%  |
| North West England       | 1.1         | 1.2  | 24%                        | 24%  |
| West Midlands            | 0.8         | 1.0  | 22%                        | 26%  |
| East of England          | 1.0         | 0.9  | 23%                        | 22%  |
| South West England       | 0.9         | 0.8  | 24%                        | 23%  |
| Yorkshire and the Humber | 1.2         | 0.7  | 32%                        | 21%  |
| East Midlands            | 0.7         | 0.6  | 24%                        | 21%  |
| North East England       | 0.2         | 0.3  | 12%                        | 17%  |

\*Source: [ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/families/datasets/familiesandhouseholds](https://ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/families/datasets/familiesandhouseholds)  
England regional breakdowns only. Sample size too small for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland regions.

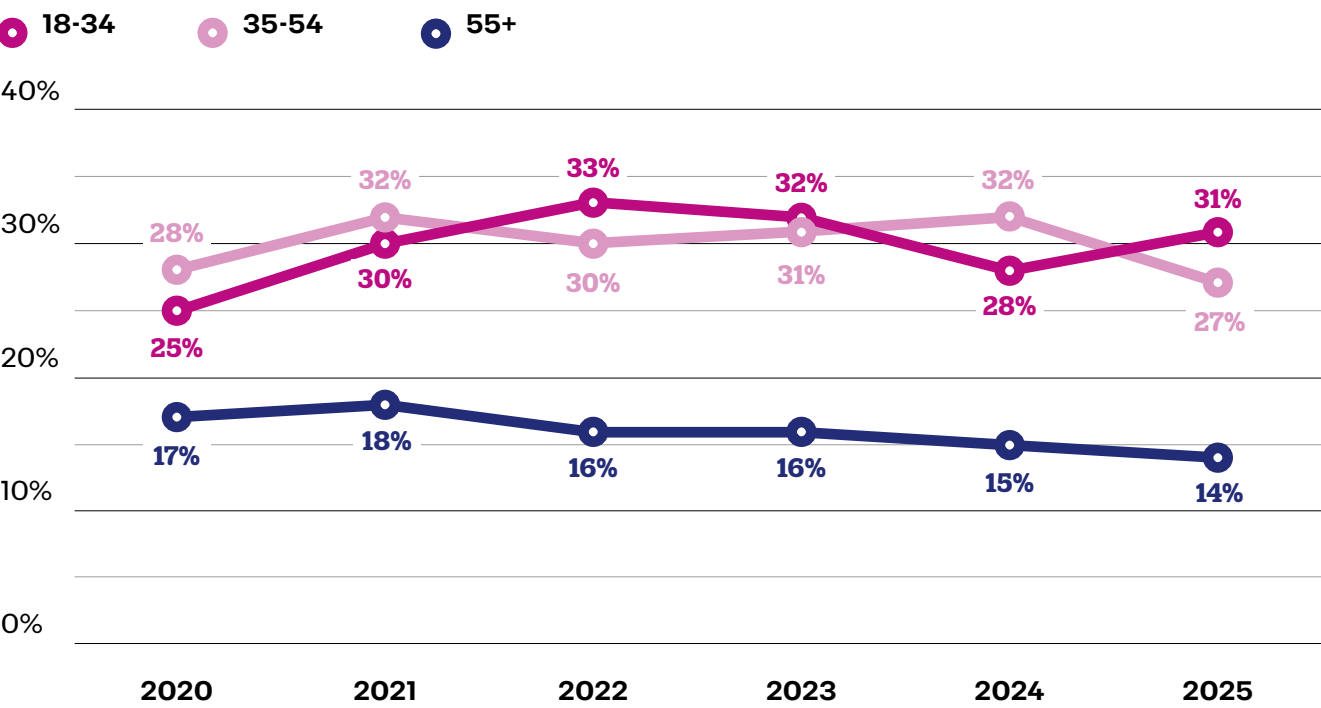
## Profile of cat owners

In recent years there has been a trend away from cat owners being predominantly female, towards a more even split of male and female owners.

### Cat ownership within subgroups

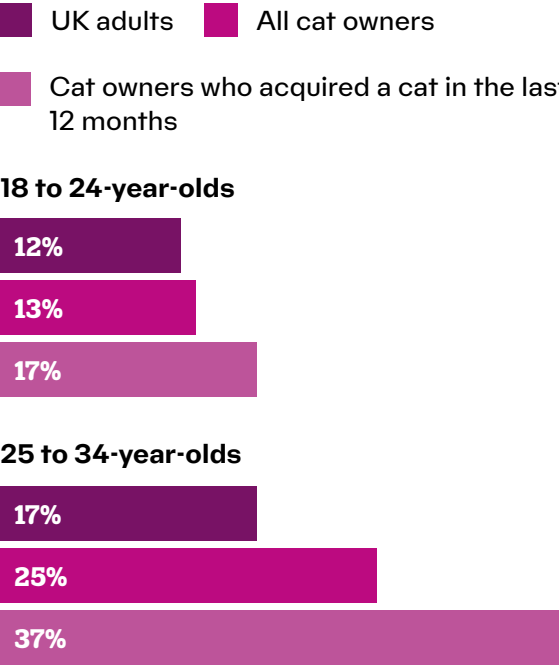


Ownership has increased for 18 to 34-year-olds, declined for 35 to 54-year-olds, and although stable for women and those age 55+, is at its lowest level for these groups since 2020.



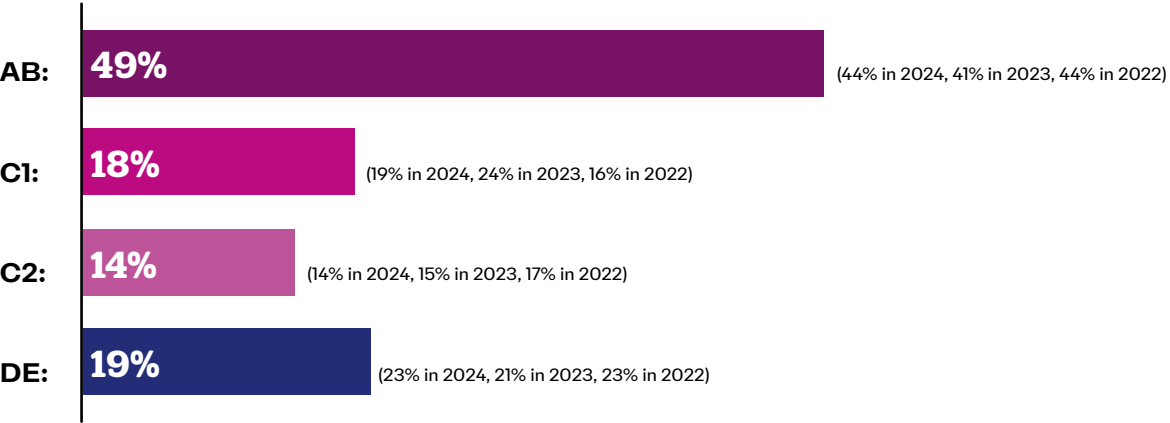


However, those under 35 years old are still more likely to have recently acquired a cat.

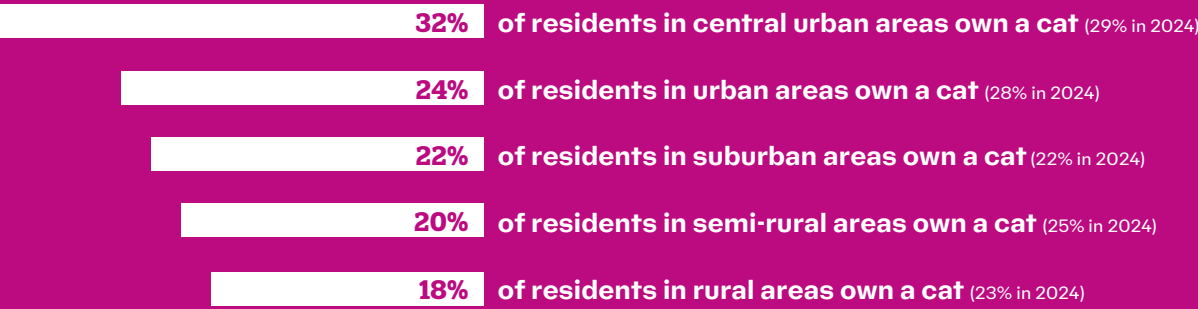


UK cat owners are less likely to be over the age of 65 when compared to the general population and those acquiring a cat in the last 12 months tend to be younger than the overall profile of cat owners. Possibly linked to this, there is also a clear trend of cat owners being more likely to have children in the household (51%, 41% in 2021).

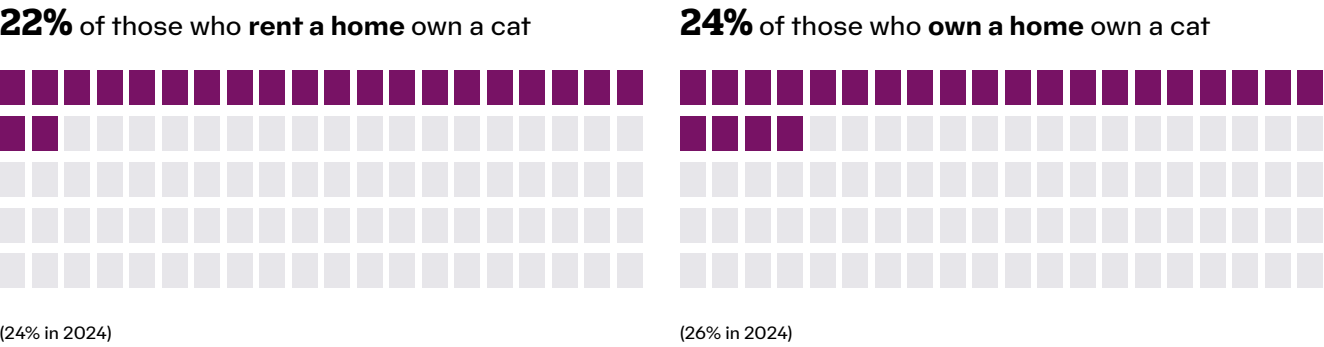
A higher proportion of cat owners who have acquired a cat in the last 12 months are in more affluent social groups\*.



Where cats live remains largely consistent with last year.



Cat ownership has decreased regardless of home ownership status



\*Approximated social grade is a socio-economic classification that has six categories: A, B, C1, C2, D and E. It applies to every UK household and is based on determining the employment category of the main income earner in a household.

# The cat market

## Key takeaways

1

Specific breeds of cats make up over 50% of recent acquisitions and now represent 36% of the total cat population

2

For cat acquisition, there has been a shift back to using classified sites, but social media continues to play a significant role

3

Those acquiring cats tend to be younger, more affluent owners living in urban areas

## What type of cats do people have?

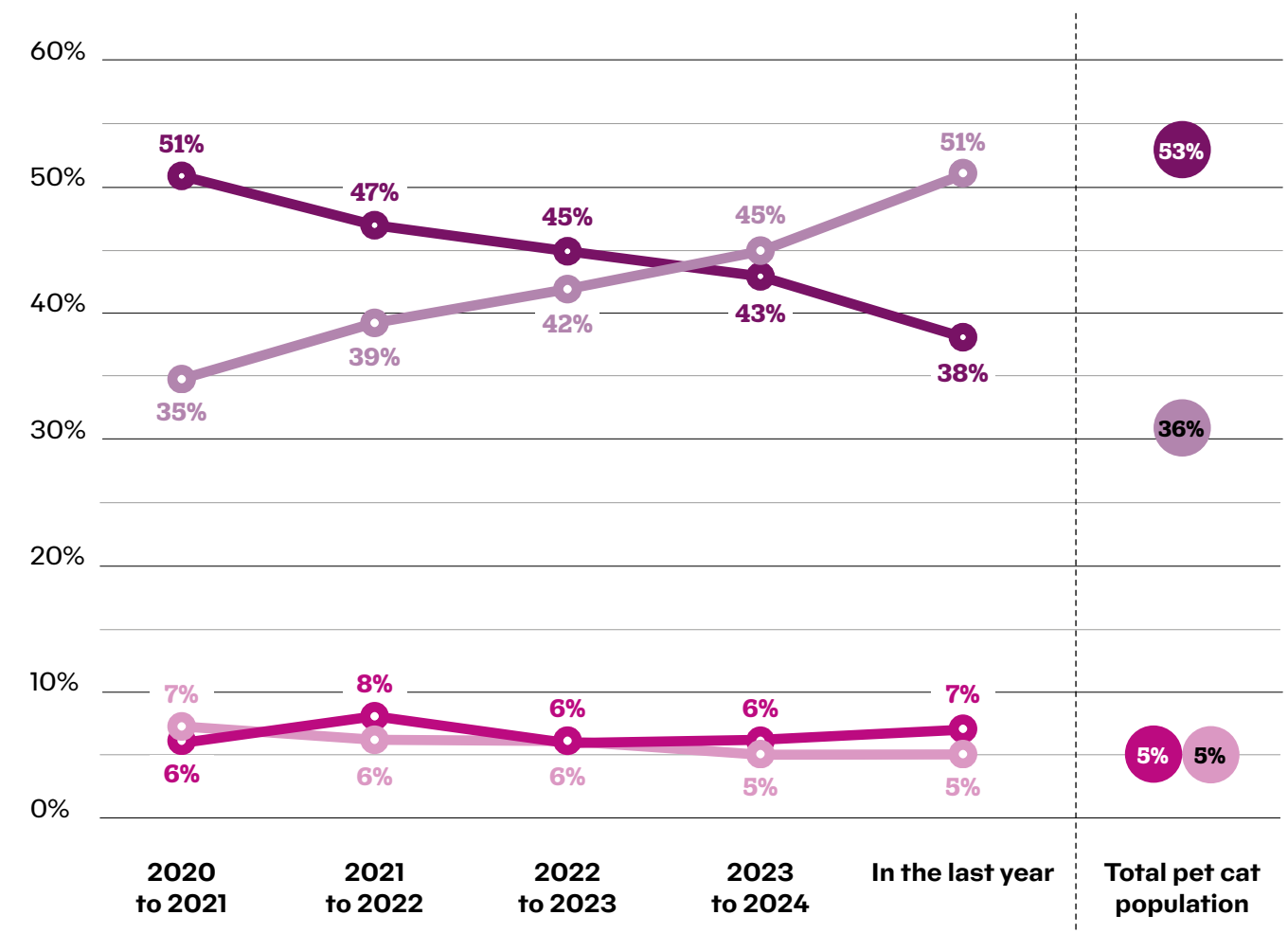
The significant growth in the popularity of pedigree cats continues. For the first time, for cats acquired in the last 12 months, over half are pedigrees (51%).

Echoing the trend across cat ownership generally, the increasing popularity in pedigree cat ownership is still being driven by younger, more affluent owners. The proportion of 18 to 34-year-old cat owners owning a pedigree cat has once again seen a significant increase this year, with 49% now sharing their home with one (41% in 2024, 35% in 2023).

Since 2020, this upward trend has been seen in all age groups under 55. Cat owners in the ABC1 (more affluent) socio-economic group are more likely to own a pedigree (42% versus 26% in C2DE), as are those living in urban areas (38% versus 29% in rural areas). First-time owners (42%) and male owners are also more likely to own a pedigree cat (42% versus 31% of female owners).

More than half the cats acquired in the last year are pedigrees.

● Moggy/domestic shorthair or longhair
● Pedigree/purebred
● Cross-breed (non-moggy)
● Don't know



## Pedigree versus purebred

**Purebred:** a specific breed of cat produced through selective breeding, and both parents are of the same breed.

**Cross-breed:** a breed of cat produced through breeding with different breeds, for example two different purebreds or a purebred and a non-purebred/moggy cat.

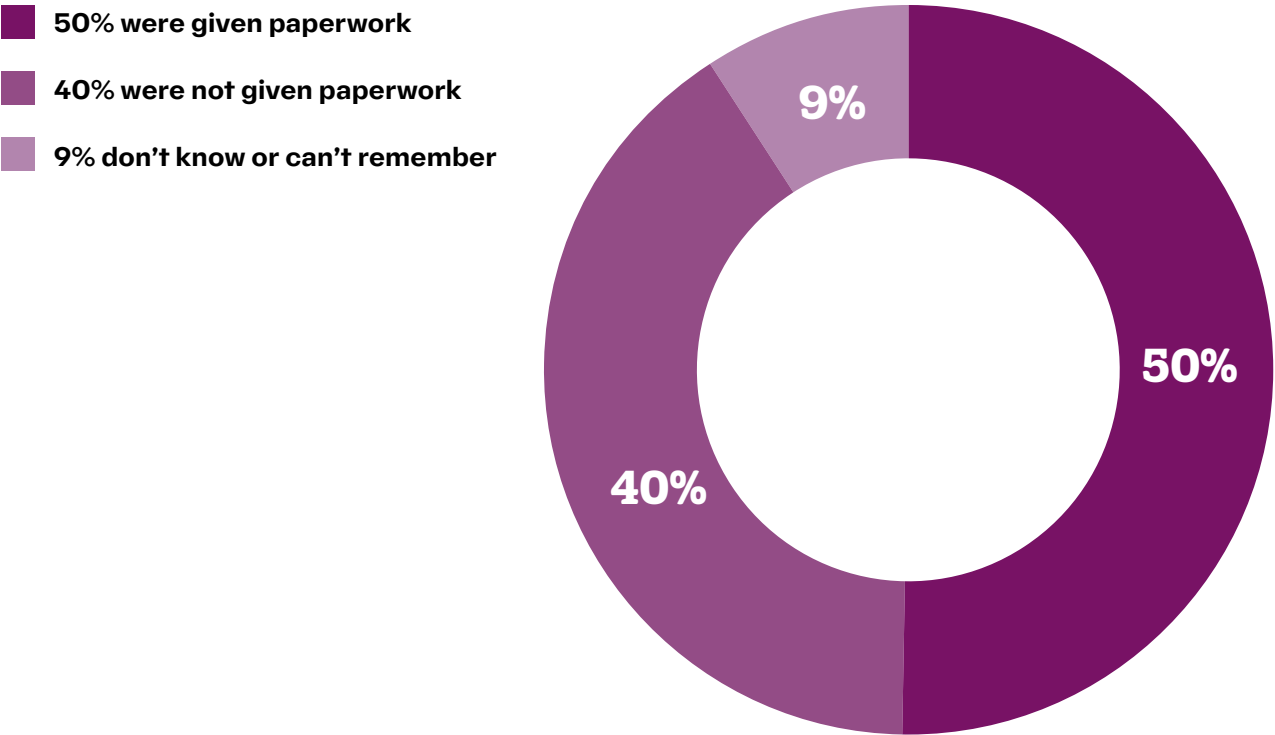
**Pedigree:** a purebred or cross-breed cat that is registered with a governing body, and the ancestry is recorded.

**Moggy:** a breed of cat that is usually produced through non-selective breeding and is neither a purebred, nor a cross-breed.

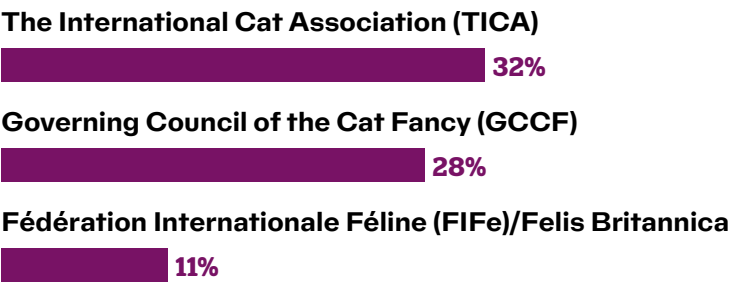
In this report, pedigree and purebred cats are included in the description of 'pedigree', with purebred cats referred to as 'pedigree without paperwork', where relevant.



Of those owners who say they don't have a moggy, **50%** say that they were given paperwork to confirm their cat's breed.

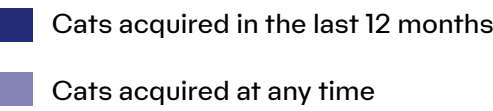


Almost a third of cats that do have paperwork are registered with TICA.



The GCCF considers harmful genetic mutations and/or structural anomalies that may affect the health and welfare of a breed before adding them to the GCCF breed register. For example, the GCCF will not accept the Scottish Fold or Munchkin onto its breed register due to these concerns. These breeds are recognised by other associations such as TICA and FIFe though, so it is still vital that cat owners have a strong understanding of the cats they are buying and the potential health risks that are intentionally bred into certain extreme breeds.

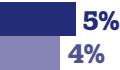
7% of cats acquired in the last 12 months are breeds which can have characteristics that could be described as extreme and cause health and welfare issues, including Scottish Fold, Persian, Munchkin, Bully cat and Sphynx.



**British Shorthair**



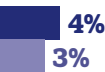
**British Longhair**



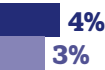
**Persian**



**Bengal**



**Ragdoll**



**Maine Coon**



**Russian Blue**



**Scottish Fold**



**Siamese**



**Siberian**



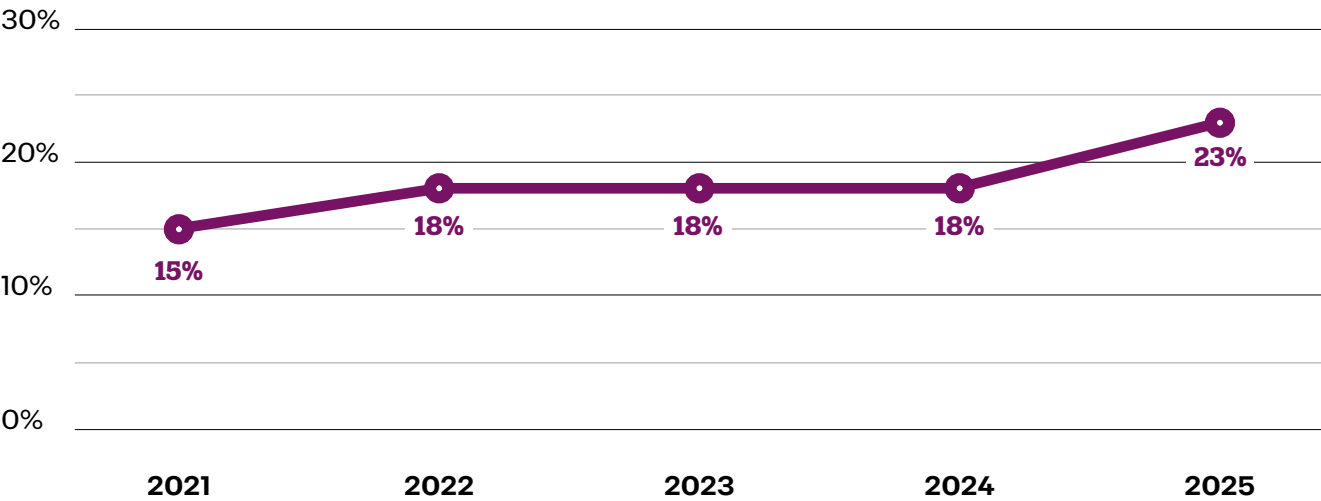
Persian



Scottish Fold

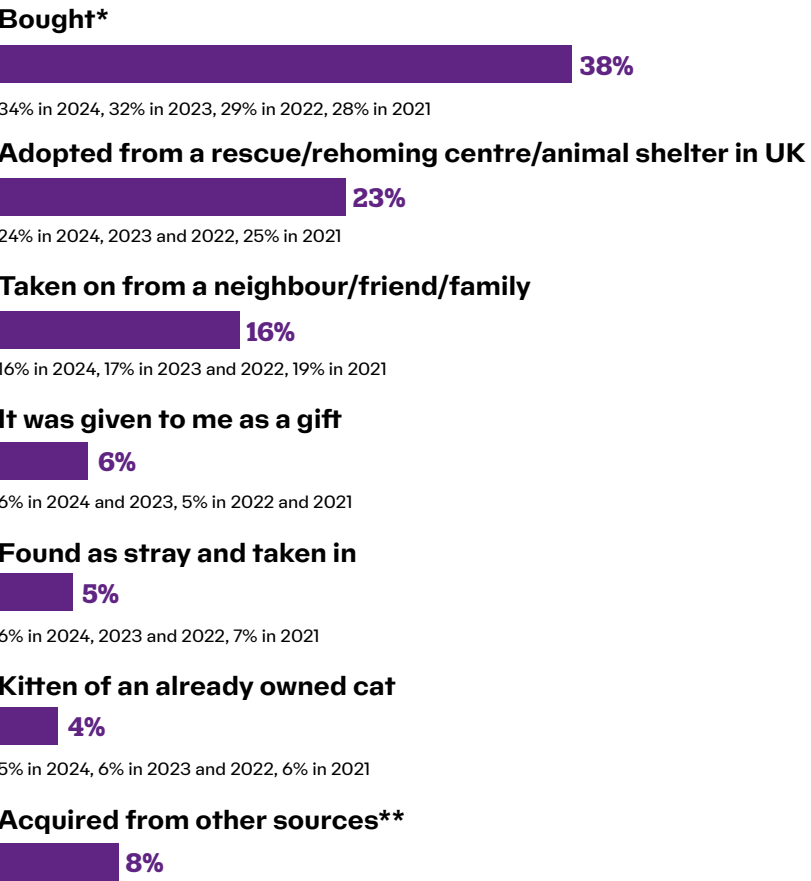
## How cats are acquired

Despite an overall decline in cat ownership, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of cat owners who acquired a cat in the last year. This recent increase may be the start of an upward trend following relative stability in the rate of cat acquisitions between 2021 and 2024.



18% of the total current cat population was acquired during the last 12 months, equating to over 1.8 million cats.

The proportion of the total pet cat population that is 'bought' has continued to increase.



This equates to a current UK pet cat population where around:

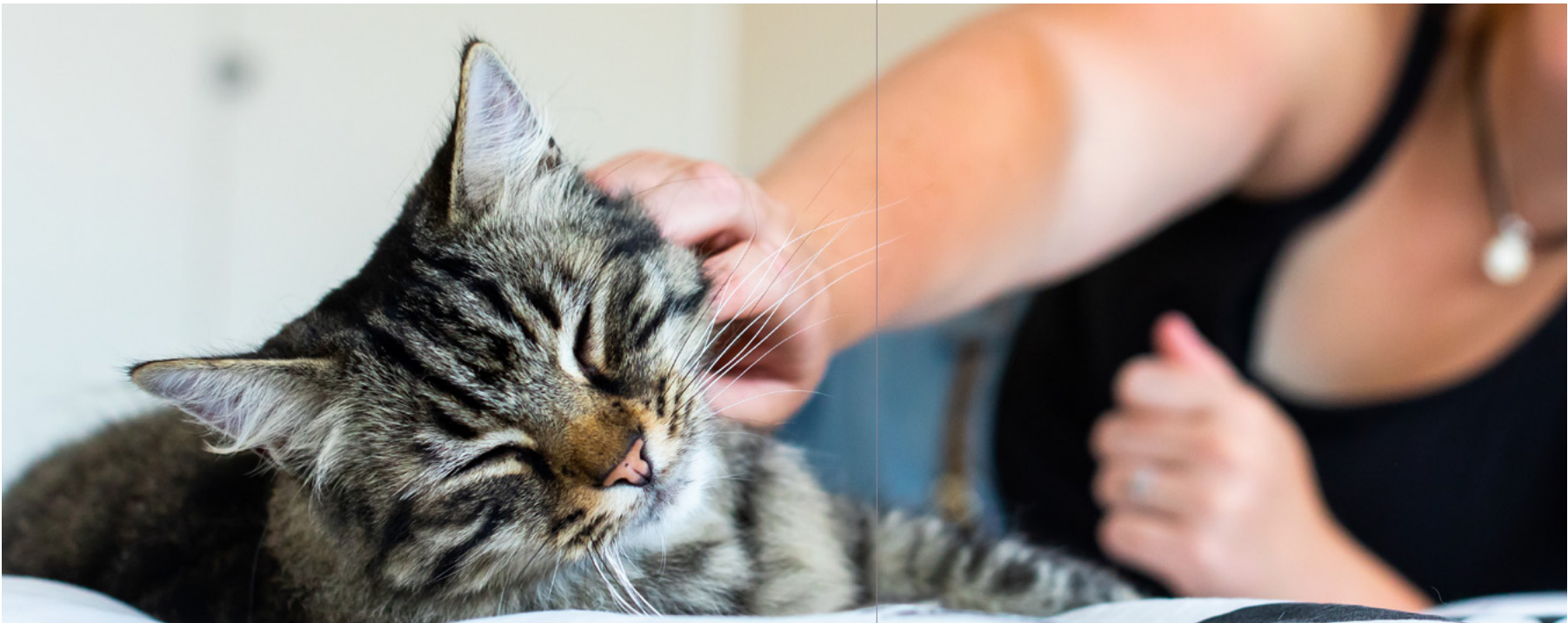
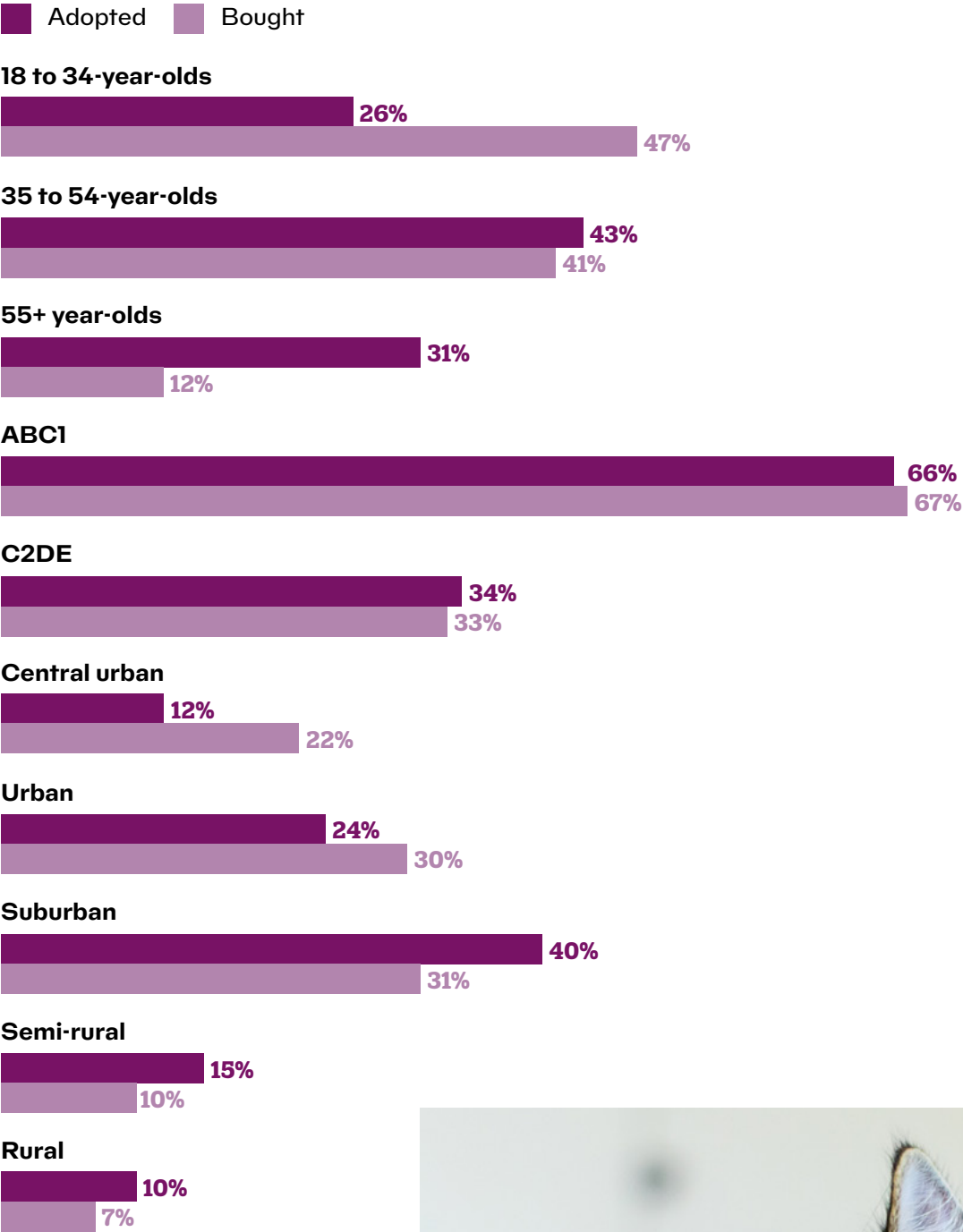


The gap between purchase and adoption is wider for cats acquired in the last 12 months.





Owners who choose to buy their cat tend to be younger, more affluent and more likely to live in urban areas.



## Where people find cats to buy

The proportion of cat owners purchasing cats from specialist UK breeders has increased in the last year (data shown for cats purchased in the last 12 months).

**Bought from a specialist breeder in the UK**



**Bought from a pet shop**



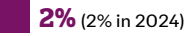
**Bought from someone I didn't know but not a specialist breeder**



**Bought from a neighbour/friend/family**



**Bought from a specialist breeder overseas**



The increase in popularity of specialist breeders may be linked with the increase in popularity of pedigree cats. This could also be a contributing factor to the skew towards more affluent cat owners. While pet shops have also increased as an acquisition source, the definition of this does vary between individuals, often to include online sources. For example, 26% of those who acquired their cat from Pets4Homes stated that they bought their cat from a pet shop.

New owners are less likely to source their cat on Facebook than in previous years.

■ Bought at any time  
■ Bought in the last 12 months

**Pets4Homes**



**Word of mouth**



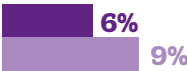
**Facebook**



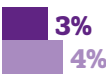
**Gumtree**



**Instagram**



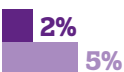
**Freeads.co.uk**



**Preloved**



**TikTok**

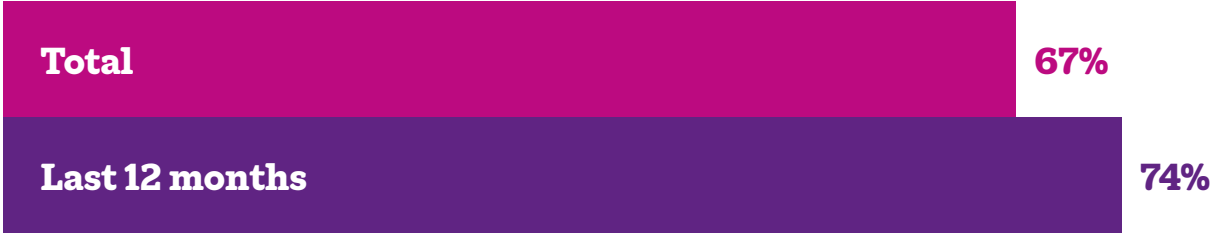


**Newspaper/magazine advert**



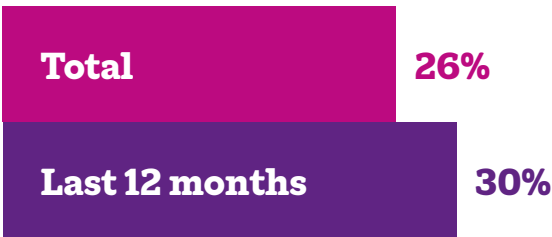
Of all cats purchased, **67%** were bought from online sources (63% in 2024)\*.

**74%** for those cats purchased in the last 12 months (72% in 2024).



**26%** of all cats purchased were sourced on social media (27% in 2024).

**30%** of those cats purchased in the last 12 months (37% in 2024).



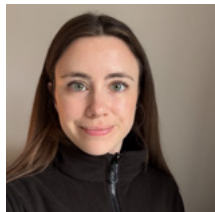
Online sources for purchasing cats continue to increase in popularity. This inevitably affects the dynamic of how more people search for a cat to buy. For example, the search function on websites such as Pets4Homes asks what kind of cat an individual wants when starting their search. This naturally leads to searches for a specific breed or breeds, rather than the potential new owner being presented with a range of cat types available, including moggies.

Figures from the last 12 months suggest that overall, social media has dropped in popularity as a source to purchase cats. This is particularly true for Facebook, which was the single biggest individual source used to find cats to buy in 2023 to 2024. The shift to selling sites that are engaging with animal welfare organisations through the Pet Advertising Advisory Group (PAAG) is welcomed, as the welfare of cats and kittens for sale is more likely to be considered. The PAAG is a multi-organisation group that aims to ensure that pet animals advertised for sale are done so legally and ethically.

\*Figure calculated through those selecting Rescue/rehoming centre website, freeads.co.uk, Pets4Homes, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Other social media, Gumtree, Preloved and Other website.

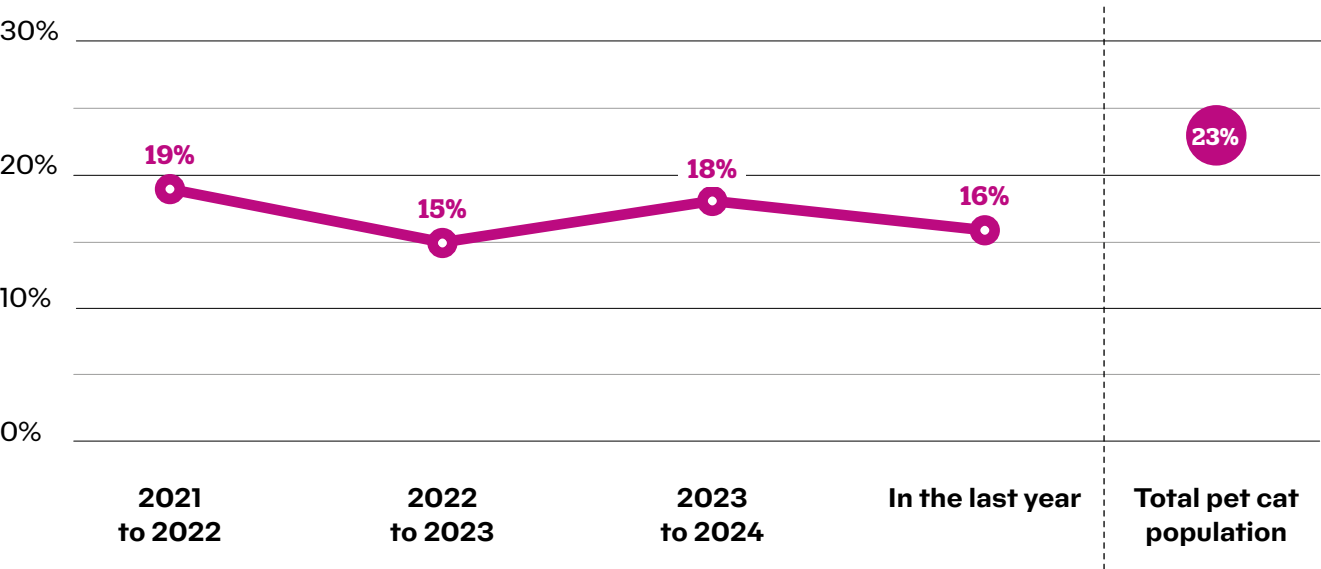
“Following work by the Pet Advertising Advisory Group (PAAG) to highlight the risks of social media pet acquisition, it is welcome news that the proportion of cats being found on social media has decreased this year. That it still represents the source for almost a third of cat acquisitions in the last 12 months remains a significant concern though. The PAAG will continue to monitor how pets are advertised on these platforms to highlight concerns and expose loopholes in site rules.”

Claire Wilson-Leary, Dogs Trust/Chair of Pet Advertising Advisory Group



Cat adoption

Adoption figures have dropped in the last 12 months.



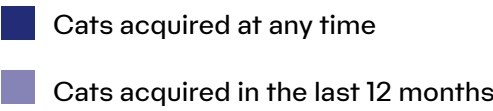
Adopters tend to be older and live in suburban or rural areas when compared to those who choose to purchase their cat. As younger owners drive the shift towards purchase rather than adoption and older owners form increasingly less of the overall market, this trend is likely to continue. This could mean that the cats entering the care of rehoming centres are increasingly those that are unable to be sold. If this translates into increased length of stay, it will inevitably put more pressure on the resources of the rehoming sector.

In the last 12 months, 26% of cat adoptions were from Cats Protection. In 2024, Cats Protection found new homes for 29,000 cats (2023: 30,000). An average of 2,000 cats a month have been on waiting lists to come into rescue care at Cats Protection centres in the last 12 months\*.

\*April 2024 to March 2025.



The top reason for choosing a specific acquisition source is most likely to be related to the individual cat themselves (cat factors)\*



How a cat is presented/looks is clearly a strong motivator for owners wanting to acquire them. This is important for the rehoming sector to remember when appealing to potential owners.

“Choosing the right image to advertise a cat for adoption is something that we place huge importance on. After all, a picture speaks a thousand words! Just changing the image on a cat’s adoption profile has converted a long-stay cat to one that is living in a suitable new home. While creating immediate appeal for potential adopters is obviously key, we are also careful to balance this with information about the individual needs and character traits of each cat, to ensure that we can match them with the best home.”

**Vicki Small, Regional Community Operations Manager, Cats Protection**



\*Codes include:

The cat: I very much wanted this particular cat, I fell in love with a photo or video of this cat, I wanted a particular breed, I specifically wanted a kitten and it was the only place I could get one from.

Cost: it was the cheapest option, I didn't want to pay an adoption fee, it was free.

Convenience: it was the easiest, most hassle-free option, it was the quickest way of getting a cat.

Circumstance: the owner was moving away, the owner was moving into rented accommodation, the cat previously belonged to someone that died, to help out a friend, family member or neighbour, the cat was already neutered, vaccinated and vet checked, I was concerned about the cat's welfare if I hadn't taken them home, I was turned down by a breeder or charity.



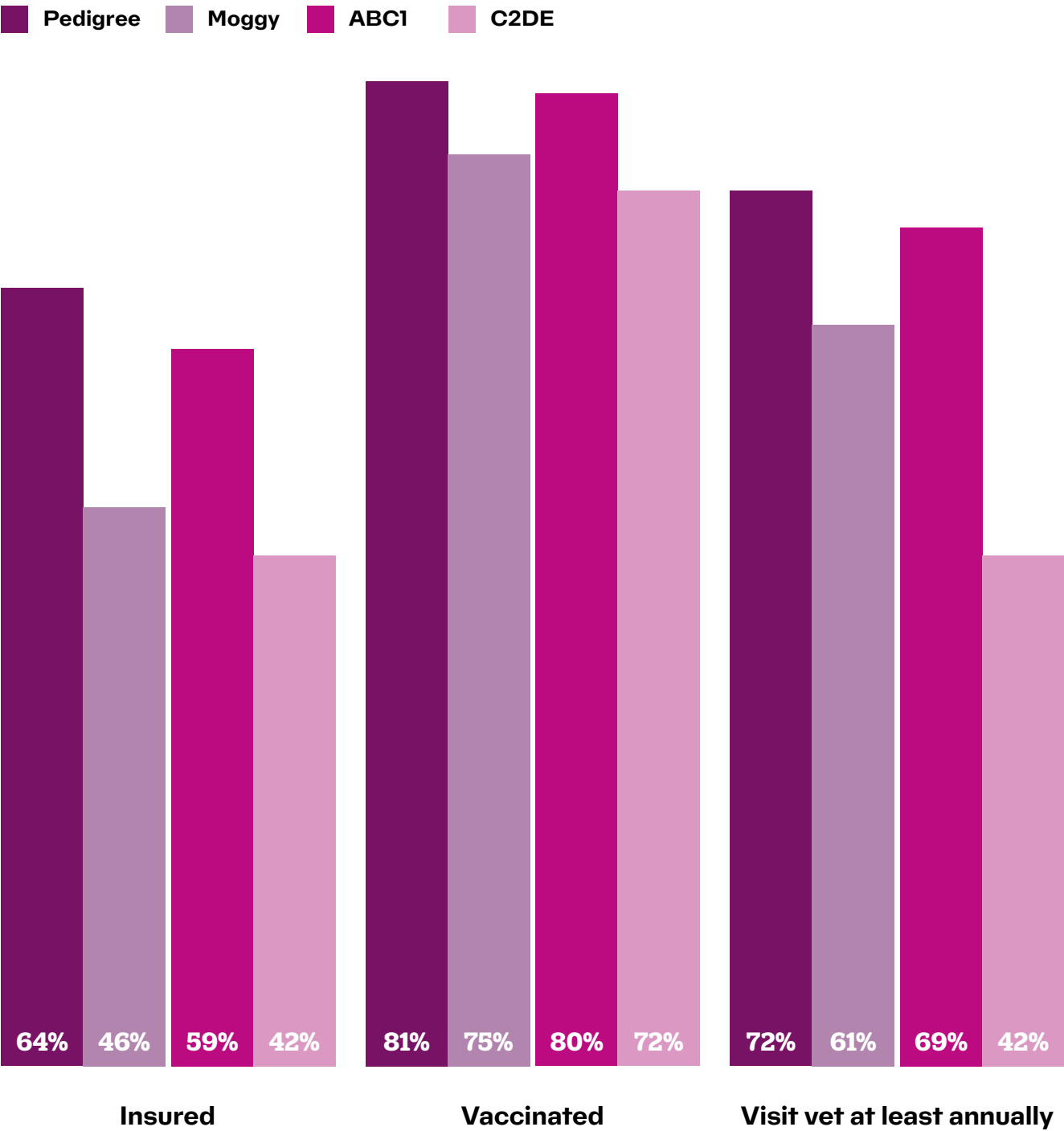
# Cats as a luxury

Many trends in the CATS data indicate that our perception and consideration of cat ownership are changing. Over time, cat acquisition has started to skew towards higher socio-economic groups, pedigree cats and purchase rather than adoption.

Meanwhile, the general rise in cost of living seen in recent years has added pressure on the less financially able, while also increasing the costs of caring for a cat, including vet costs. This suggests a widening gap between ‘rich and poor’ and raises an important question for society: how comfortable are we that cat ownership is moving towards being a luxury, and what are the wider implications of this?

Potential benefits of the emerging trend in cat acquisition

There are many examples where cats are receiving better care due to this trend. Pedigree cats are more likely to be insured, visit the vets regularly and be up to date with routine preventative healthcare such as vaccinations and parasite treatment. The same is echoed in more affluent owner demographics.



Pedigree cats are also much less likely to be unwanted; the demographic of cats in rescue care certainly leans towards moggies.

Valid concerns

It is important to make sure that potential issues aren't ignored though. Pedigree cats are more likely to be kept indoors (46% versus 32% of moggies). Their rise in popularity is a key part of the driving force behind the overall increase in the proportion of indoor cats since 2020. Ensuring that the welfare needs of indoor cats are adequately met requires knowledge, time and effort from owners. Owners who are increasingly young, professional and therefore likely busier than ever. 58% of cat owners work more than 30 hours per week now, compared to 46% in 2021.

With less neutering and more intentional breeding, is market saturation also something to be concerned about? This, along with the increased care requirements of some pedigree breeds, could create a future situation where a wave of pedigree cats with complex needs that make them harder to sell/care for end up in rehoming centres for extended periods.

Another effect of this shift towards more affluent ownership is potential dampening of the overall impact of cost of living being seen at a national level in the CATS data. This means that the true situation for many cats in lower-income households is perhaps concealed, making it harder to ascertain the needs of the most vulnerable owners. Affordability is still a factor for 19% of those who don't own a cat currently but want to (20% in 2024), so it is still a significant barrier to ownership for many. This means that many may be missing out on the valuable wellbeing benefits of owning a cat.

21% of people who had to give up their cat say that affordability is the reason\*.

25% in 2024, 19% in 2023, 21% in 2022, 13% in 2021, 8% in 2020

\*Codes include: I couldn't afford it, my circumstances changed and I couldn't afford the cat any more, my cat had a medical issue that I did not have the financial resources to address.

What should the sector do?

People looking to acquire cats are increasingly less likely to adopt from welfare charities, as these organisations are perhaps increasingly less likely to be able to provide for the shifting demographic. Rehoming policies that don't favour urban, indoor environments are more likely to be a barrier, and charities are less likely to have the pedigree cats that are increasingly sought after.

Over recent years, animal welfare charities have sought to highlight the cost of cat ownership in pursuit of better welfare. Messaging has been focused on making sure you can afford a pet before buying one but also highlighting the benefits of pet ownership. While this is ultimately a responsible approach, has the balance tipped too far the other way, with many good homes for cats feeling 'priced out' of cat ownership and the benefits that it brings?

Maybe it's time to take a more case-by-case approach to rehoming, really champion the moggy and critically think about how best to appeal to the modern cat owner and motivate them to become enthusiastic adopters!



# Veterinary care

## Key takeaways

1

Neutering numbers are falling as we also see a rise in younger, more affluent pet owners of pedigree cats, many of whom want their cats to have kittens

2

More owners are choosing to breed their cat, but more kittens are being given away, rather than sold

3

Microchipping numbers have not increased, despite the introduction of compulsory microchipping for pet cats in England in 2024

## Veterinary capacity

A significantly higher proportion of cat owners say that they have experienced difficulty accessing a vet than last year.



Of those owners who struggled to access a vet, these are the top reasons:

**vet too busy**



**vet has reduced opening hours**



**reduced service delaying booking of surgery**



Problems with accessing a vet are reportedly higher for those aged 18 to 34 (47%) and those living in urban areas (32%). These individuals are perhaps more likely to be unavailable during the working day when vets are open, which is further compounded for the owners who report that their local vets have reduced opening hours.

However, access is improved from the backlogs seen post-pandemic when it reached 37% in 2022.

## Vet registration



The number of cats who are registered with a vet has increased again from 91% last year to 92%.

This is positive but **still leaves over 800,000 cats not registered** with a vet.

Some cats and their owners will be more likely to require veterinary help. For example, outdoor cats are at greater risk of injury due to their lifestyle, and first-time owners may require more health advice. Every effort must be made to support access to veterinary care for these groups.

Higher for:

**outdoor-only cats**



**uninsured cats**



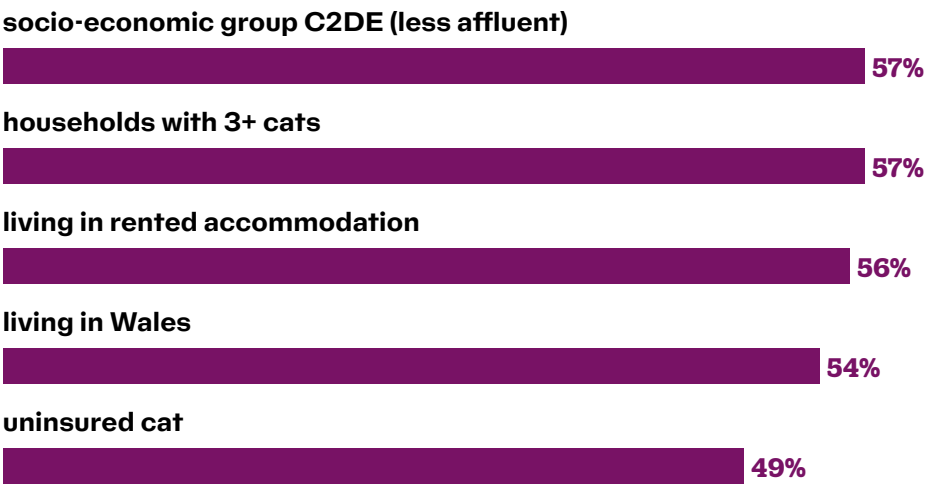
**cats of first-time owners**



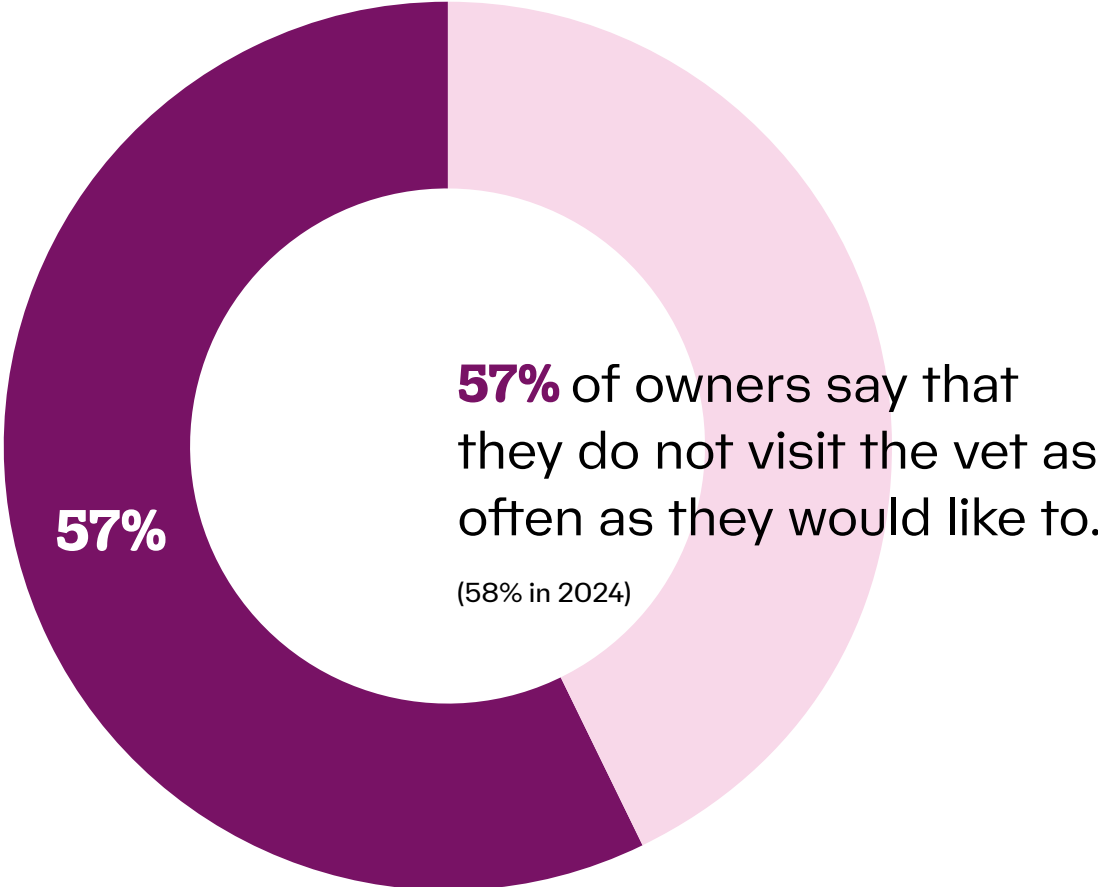
## Vet visits

64% of owners take their cat to the vet routinely every year

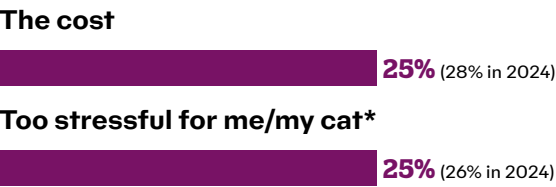
Lower than average:



The steady rise in annual vet visits since 2020 (57%) seems to be continuing, which is great news for cat health. This does mean that over 3.5 million cats are not receiving regular veterinary care. Regular vet visits are important to spot disease early and ensure that cats receive preventative care. Early intervention is often not only better for the cat, but also their owner, as the cost of veterinary care goes up when cats present with advanced disease or long-established health problems that could have been caught sooner.



For the first time, the stress of a vet visit is equal to cost as a barrier to visiting the vet.



This may be indicative of the shift towards more affluent owners, rather than vets becoming more affordable. Concern regarding the practical logistics and inconvenience of taking their cat to the vet has grown over the years though. For example, 9% of owners say they can’t take time off work (5% in 2022) and 8% of owners say that they struggle to get an appointment time that works for them (6% in 2022). Mobile vet clinics and other forms of remote consultation such as telemedicine have become more readily available in recent years. These services may represent a way to address some of these access issues.

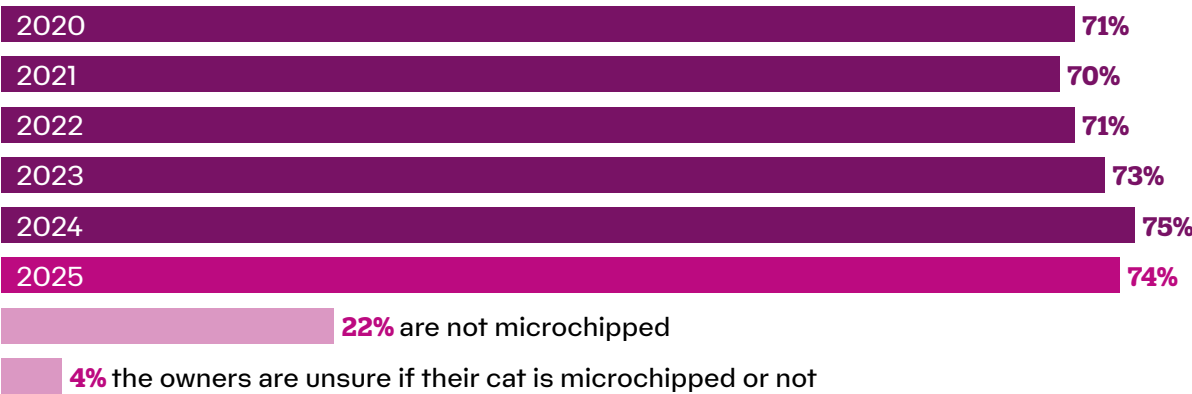
It is also encouraging to see the pharmaceutical industry proactively producing more ‘easy to give’ medications for cats, which may contribute to lowering the stress barrier of cats accessing veterinary care.

\*Net of responses related to these themes.

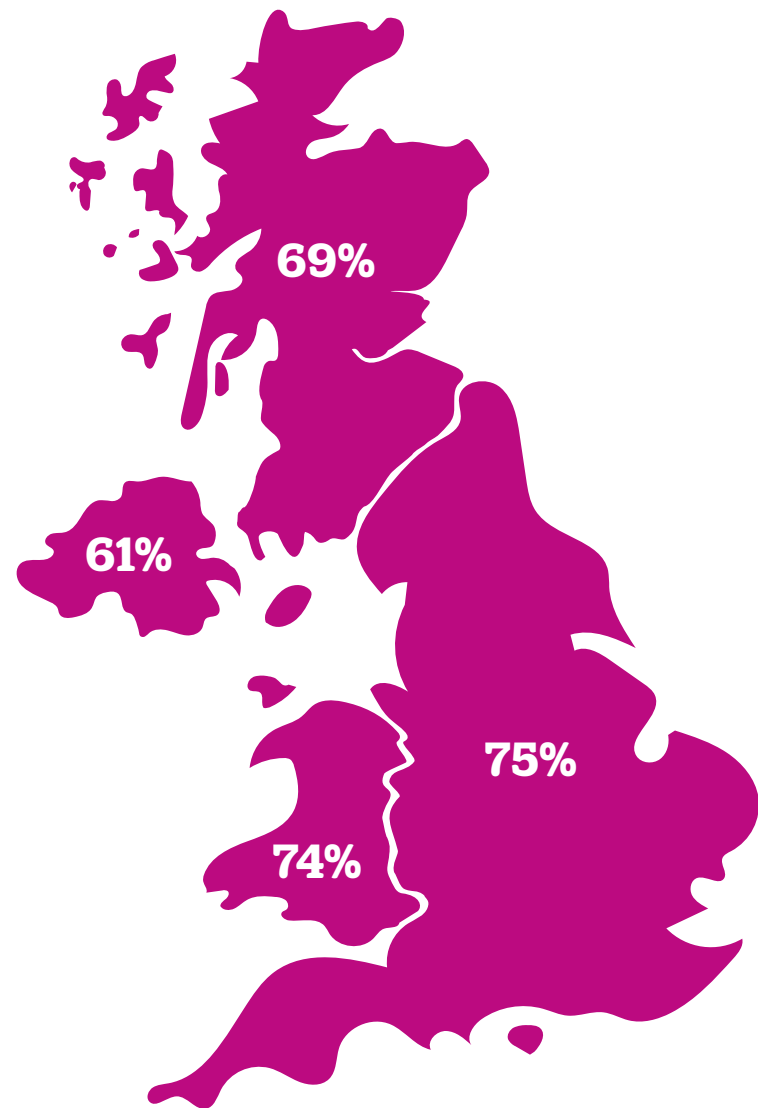


# Microchipping

Microchipping numbers have stalled across the UK, despite the introduction of compulsory pet cat microchipping in England.



Microchipping numbers across the UK nations



## The cats less likely to be microchipped

In England, microchipping has been a legal requirement for all pet cats since June 2024. Over 2.6 million cats are still potentially without a microchip, reducing their chances of being reunited with their owners, should they get lost or stolen.

Younger (18 to 34: 64%), male (70%) and first-time (63%) owners are less likely to have had their cat microchipped.

Younger owners are also significantly more likely to use technology such as GPS trackers for keeping tabs on their cat. As well as often being bulky and potentially uncomfortable for a cat to wear, these trackers can be easily removed if a cat is stolen, so they are never a good direct replacement for a microchip.

Perhaps surprisingly, moggies are more likely to have been microchipped than pedigrees (82% versus 65%). This gap is smaller for those acquired in the last 12 months though (moggies: 67%, pedigrees: 55%) and moggies are less likely to have been acquired recently. In addition, 89% of cats that were adopted are microchipped compared to 71% of those that were bought, and moggies are more likely to have been adopted than pedigrees.

The main reasons cat owners are choosing not to get their cat microchipped relate to perceived need.

### My cat doesn't go outside



### My cat doesn't stray/go far



Irrespective of perceived risk or lifestyle, legislation in England states that all pet cats must be microchipped. National data shows that 37% of the general population is not aware of this. 5% of the cat owners in England surveyed for this report said that they were not aware of the legislative change before being asked about it. This rises to 14% of those whose cat is not registered with a vet, highlighting the likely important role of vets in raising awareness of this law. This figure is also higher for those aged 18 to 24 (10%) and first-time owners (9%), making these groups important to target with awareness campaigns. Reassuringly though, national awareness has seen a dramatic increase since January 2024, from 45% to 63%\*.

Many owners/vets opt to microchip cats when neutering them. With neutering numbers falling, this may have a knock-on effect of also lowering microchipping numbers. For this reason, it is recommended that vets encourage microchipping as early as possible, either at vaccination or before the cat leaves their breeder.

The responsibility to ensure a pet's microchip is registered and kept up to date sits primarily with the pet owners. Breeders, shelters and sellers should ensure a chip is registered to the new owner or provide transfer instructions. Veterinary practices are not legally responsible for registration, but many vets will remind owners to register/update details.

\*nfpResearch, nfpPublic UK April 2025 | Base: 1004 respondents 16+, United Kingdom

Microchips and keeping details up to date

93% of cats with a microchip have up-to-date details.

Of those who say their cat’s microchip details are up to date:

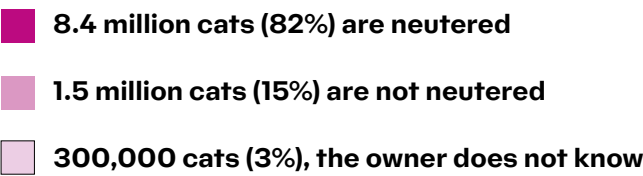


Of the owners who have had their cat microchipped, the proportion that say their details are up to date remains largely unchanged. However, this leaves **over 700,000 cats who are microchipped with details that are out of date**, potentially rendering their microchip useless, should they become separated from their family.

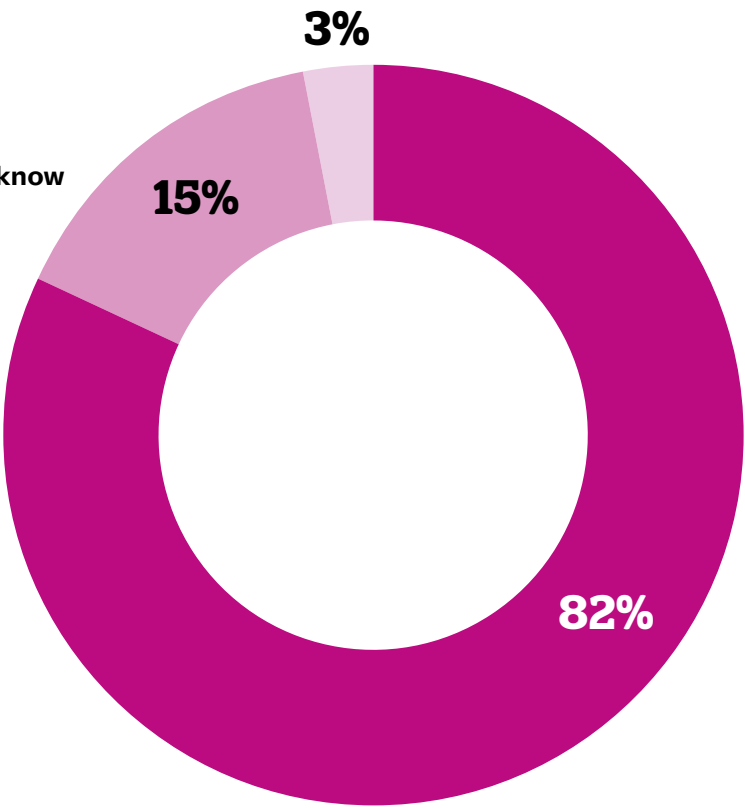


Neutering and breeding

Neutering numbers have fallen to 82% (85% in 2024).



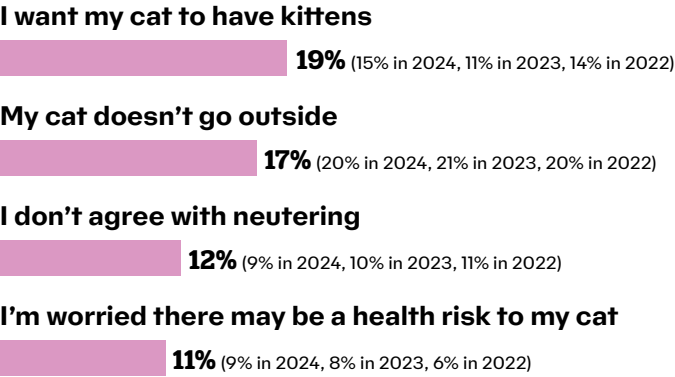
This year’s drop in neutering numbers is a departure from a few years of relative stability but continues the downward trend over time from 88% in 2020.



The cats less likely to have been neutered

Younger cat owners aged 18 to 34 are less likely to have neutered their cat (71%), compared to 85% of 35 to 54-year-olds and 95% of those aged over 55. Cats bought from a specialist breeder are also less likely to have been neutered (75%).

Wanting their cat to have kittens is increasingly a reason that owners choose not to neuter their cat.

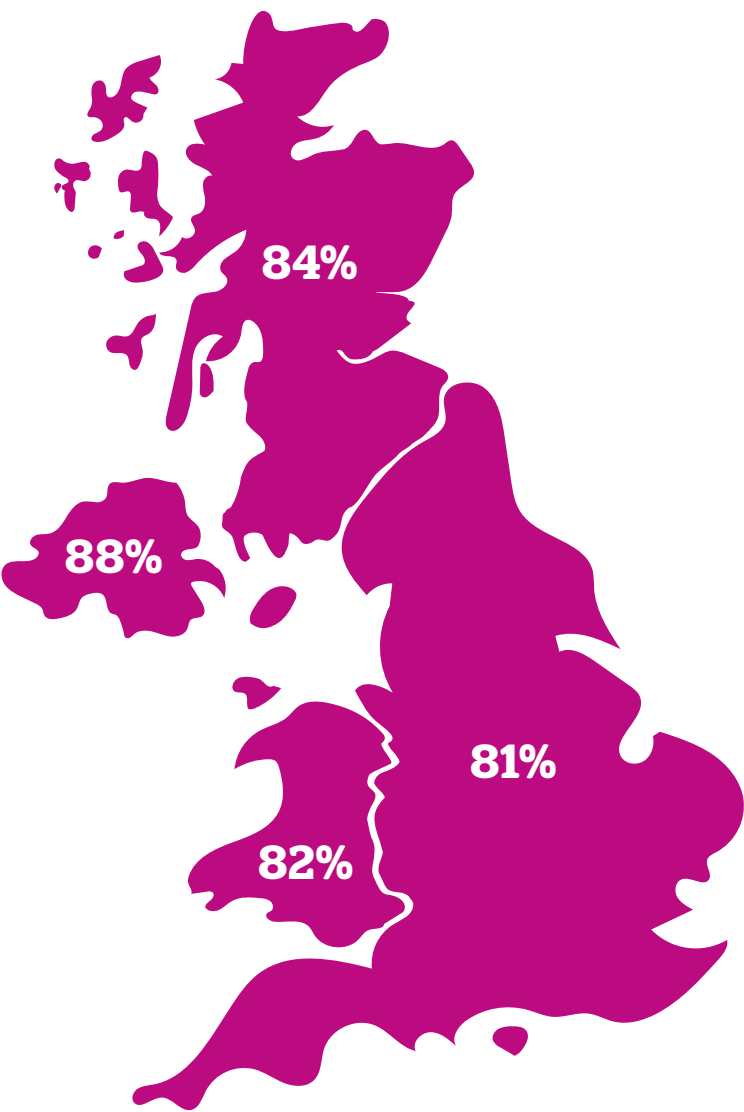




Cost is less of a barrier, dropping out of the top reasons for owners choosing not to neuter their cat for the first time in three years. This matches the overall trend of cat ownership towards more affluent owners. Regional variations mean that cost will still be the biggest barrier to neutering in some areas and helping owners with this will be an important intervention in those locations. Interestingly, there seems to have been a rise in concerns about the risks of the neutering procedure itself. Again, this seems linked to more affluent owners, who the data shows are statistically more likely to worry about this.

Attitudes towards neutering may also be shifting. For example, advice regarding dog neutering is now directed more towards consideration of factors relating to each individual dog (for example, breed, age, temperament, lifestyle). It could be that this is spilling over into the mindset towards cats too. In certain areas, the effects of overpopulation may not be as visible, so vets feel they have the space to discuss the procedure as more optional with their more affluent owners of increasingly indoor-living, pedigree cats.

Neutering numbers across the UK nations



“Neutering owned cats not only benefits individual cats but also supports the wider cat population. Failing to neuter cats, or delaying the procedure, has serious knock-on effects for all cats. Unowned cats on the streets and in rescue shelters continue to need our help, while neutering numbers among owned cats are sadly declining. This combination creates a significant welfare concern and places a heavy emotional burden on those caring for unwanted cats and kittens.

“Neutering cats at four months of age prevents early pregnancies and delivers broader population-level benefits by reducing the future suffering caused by cat overpopulation.”

Dr Jenni McDonald,  
Feline Epidemiologist,  
Cats Protection



When cats are being neutered

Cats can become reproductively active from the age of four months, so for cat population control to be fully effective, cats should be neutered by the time they reach this age (so-called ‘pre-pubertal neutering’). **20% of owners report that their cat was neutered by four months old, with 84% saying their cat was neutered by one year old.** This means that many cats may already have had a litter by the time they are neutered.

Evidence suggests that the timing of neutering is more important than the volume of cats neutered when it comes to population control. Maintaining a balanced cat population is one of the most effective ways to protect cat welfare\*.

While some evidence suggests that vets are increasingly supportive of pre-pubertal neutering, other data suggests that this support does not always translate to increased implementation\*\*.

Cats Protection aims to publish a peer-reviewed summary of the scientific evidence regarding age of neutering in cats, focusing on the physical and behavioural impacts. This will hopefully help reassure and motivate vets to increasingly adopt pre-pubertal neutering of cats.

\*McDonald J, et al. (2023) Cat: Empirical modelling of Felis catus population dynamics in the UK. *PLOS ONE* 18(7):e0287841. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0287841>

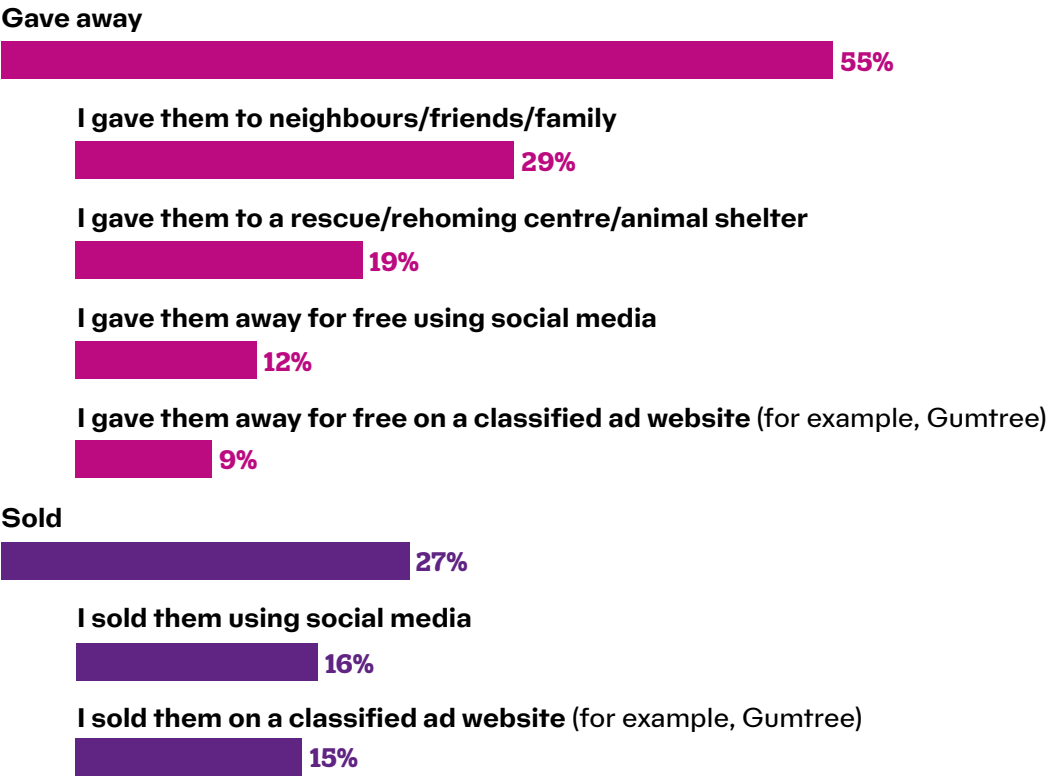
\*\*Veterinary opinions and practices around four-month neutering: longitudinal findings from BSAVA and BVNA, Cats Protection, 2023.

Litters and kittens

Fewer litters born in the last 12 months were unplanned, as a result of accidental mating: **38%**

78% of the litters from pedigree cats were planned, compared to just 49% of those from moggies. This matches the pattern in the proportion of those with unneutered cats who want their cat to have kittens (pedigree: 27%, moggy: 12%).

Most kittens born and rehomed in the last year were given away, rather than sold.



These figures correlate with more people wanting their cat to have kittens for example, intentional breeding. Thought and planning are important for ensuring the best breeding outcomes, and there is a strong role for charities to provide good welfare information for owners who intentionally breed their cats.

Rescue and rehoming organisations are already operating at full capacity, however, and cats up for rehoming with more complex care, medical or behavioural needs may spend longer in rescue care.

These additional needs are exacerbated in many pedigree breeds, so with more pedigree kittens being produced, it may not be long before these cats start appearing in rescue care. With more kittens being given away than sold, is the increase in pedigree breeding a potential future problem waiting to happen for the rehoming sector as these cats grow out of kittenhood?

Intention to rehome litters versus what may happen in reality is likely worthy of further investigation. This would help to better establish the status of the market, thereby guiding advice for breeders and would-be breeders.

Insurance

The proportion of cats insured continues to increase.

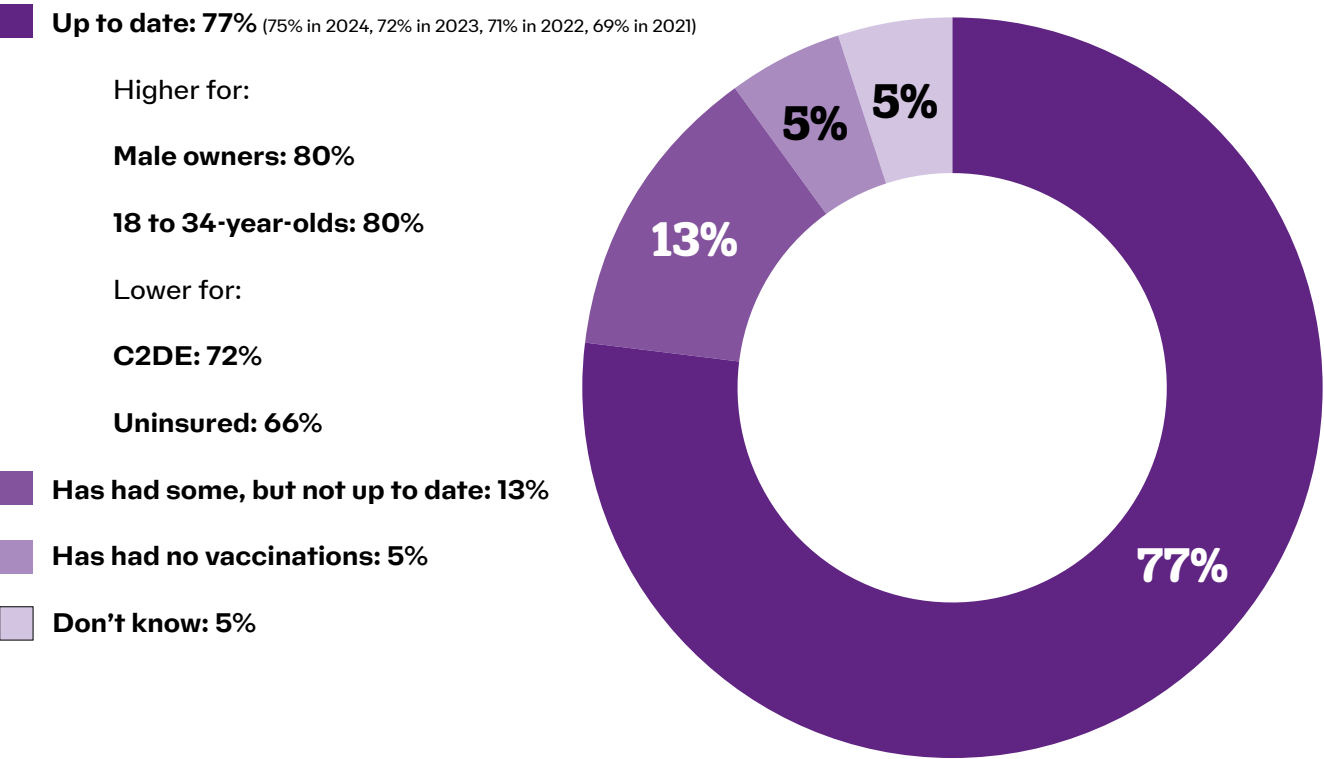


Higher for:



Vaccinations

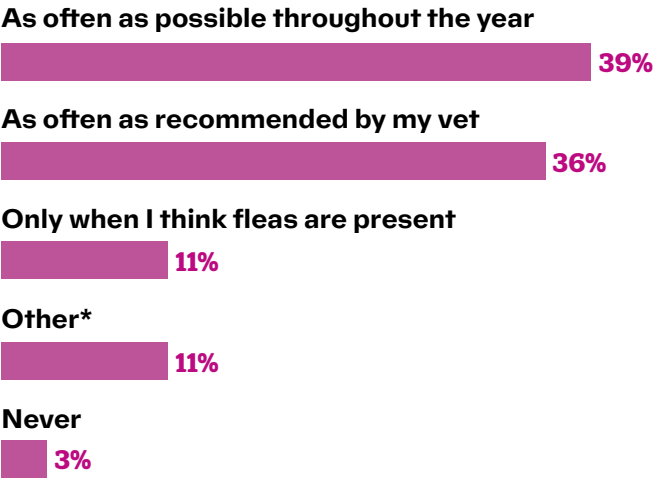
The proportion of cats that are up to date with vaccinations continues to rise.



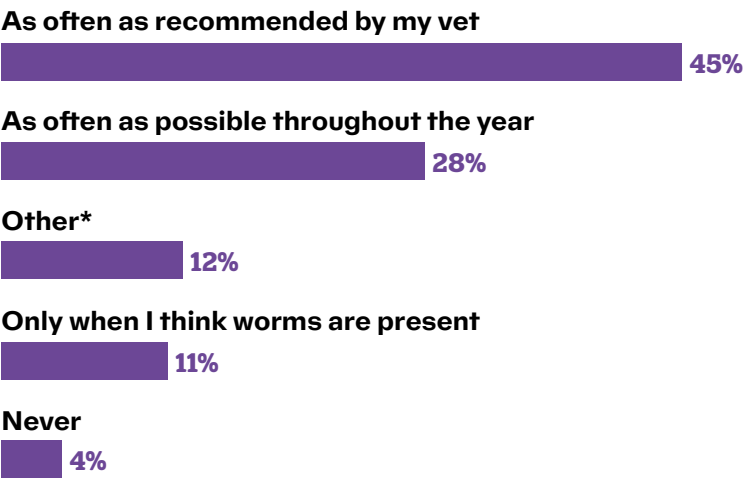


# Parasite treatments

## Flea treatment



## Worm treatment



An individual cat's risk of becoming infected with parasites is strongly linked to their lifestyle, including whether they go outdoors and their diet. Parasite treatment recommendations should therefore be evaluated on a risk-benefit basis, and vets should educate owners about the best treatment protocol. This year, the option of 'as often as recommended by a vet' was added to the list of response options. This is in light of recent evidence that overuse of parasiticides in pets can cause harm to the environment\*\*. Owners and vets are increasingly likely to choose monitoring and treating for parasites according to the cat's risk or on the basis of clinical signs of infestation, instead of sticking to blanket preventative treatment.

\*Options include: Only in summer, when I remember, once a year or less, don't know and other (please specify).

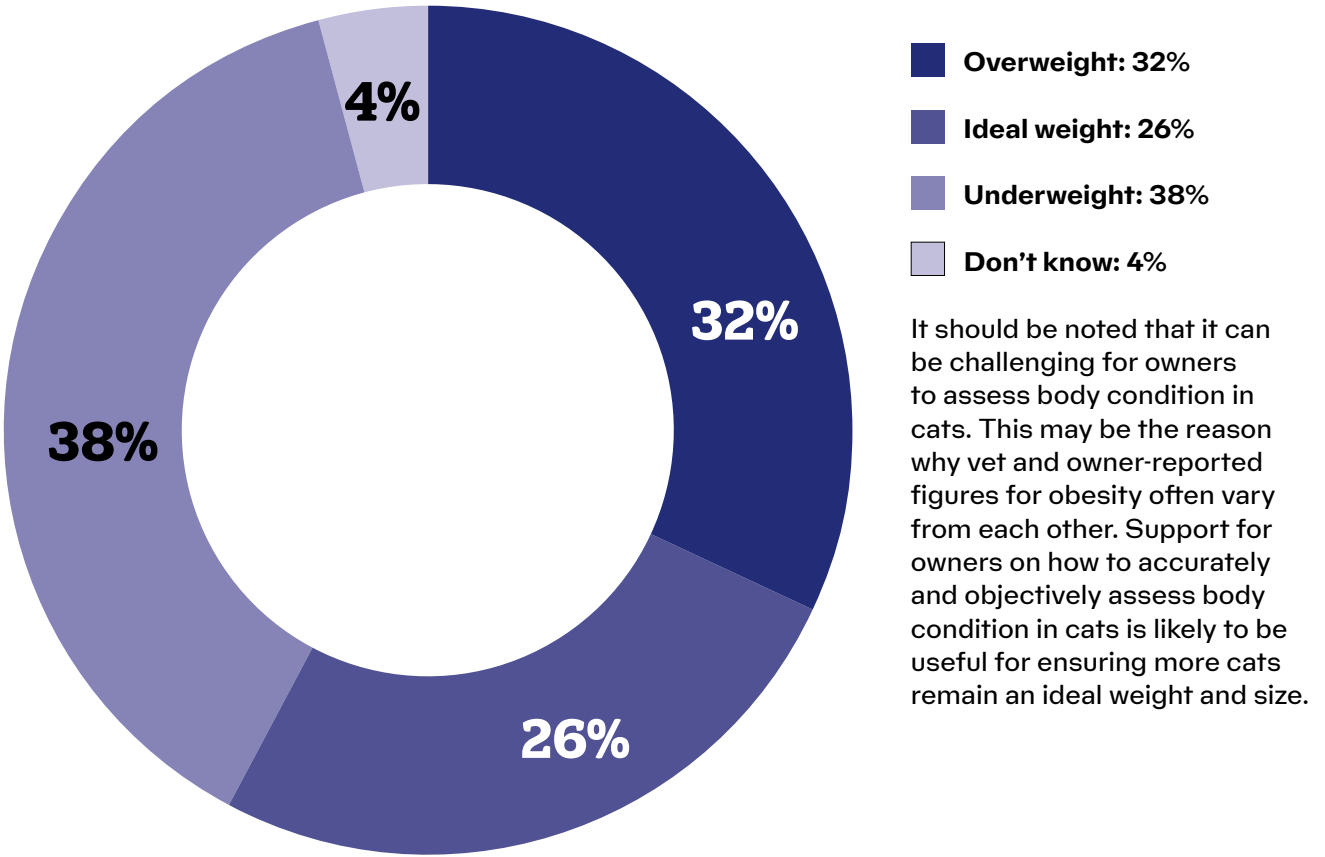
\*\*Preston-Allen RGG., et al. (2023) Are urban areas hotspots for pollution from pet parasiticides? Grantham Institute Briefing note #15.



# Health and diet

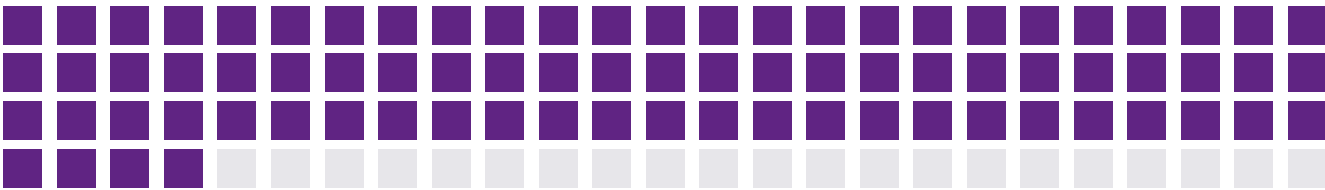
## Diet and body weight

Owner perception of their cat's weight.

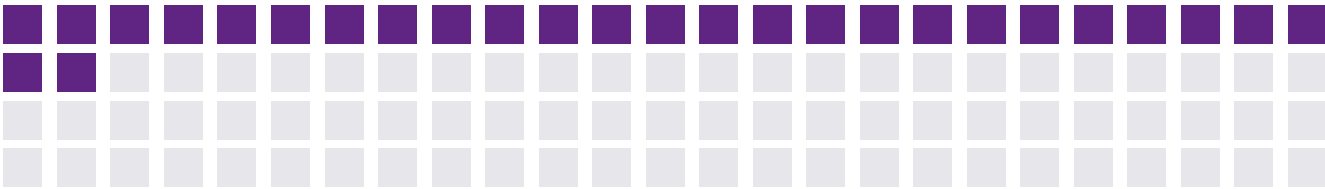


## Health conditions and injury

79% of cat owners state that their cat has no diagnosed health conditions, similar to last year (78%).



27% of owners said that their cat had been injured since they had owned them. The most common reason for injury is fights with other cats outside the household.



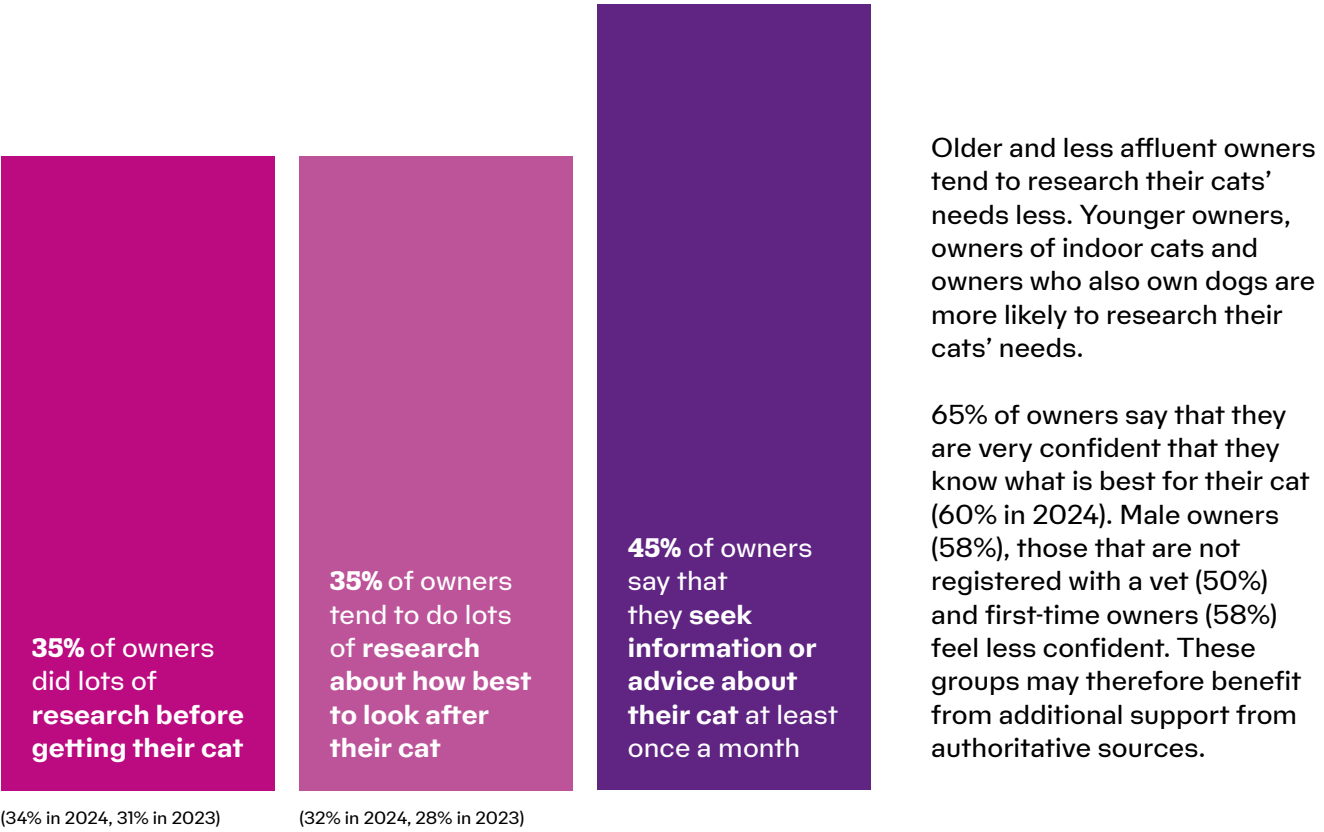
# Cat care, welfare and behaviour

## Key takeaways

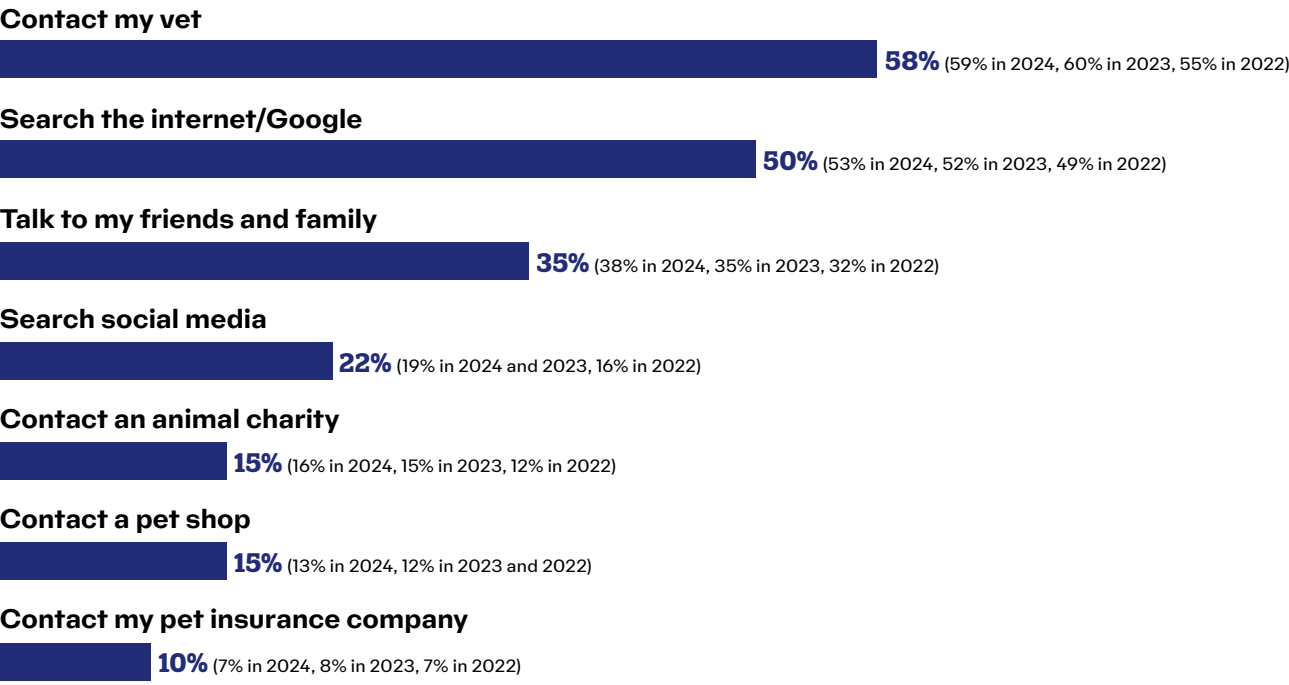


## Sources of cat care information

Cat owners are increasingly researching their cats’ needs both before and after acquisition.



Owners still turn to their vet first as a primary source of information about cats.



Younger owners are more likely to use social media to seek information about their cats but less likely to perform an internet search than older owners. This younger owner group are also turning to their vet less for advice but are instead seeking it from animal charities, pet shops and breeders more. The latter observation may be related to our finding that this demographic is more likely to acquire a pedigree cat.

“With more people choosing to breed their cats, it is less likely that the traditional view of a breeder as a client within a veterinary setting will fit the current profile. Veterinary professionals may have the view that many or most cat breeders are likely to be well supported by a breed registry or may have years of experience. However, this is increasingly less likely to be the case. Support from the veterinary practice has never been more critical in the new landscape of cat breeding and selling, to ensure that cats are bred responsibly and with welfare prioritised.”

Sarah Elliott, Central Veterinary Officer, Cats Protection





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Key findings

State of the nation

The cat market

Veterinary care

Cat care, welfare and behaviour

Companionship and challenges to ownership

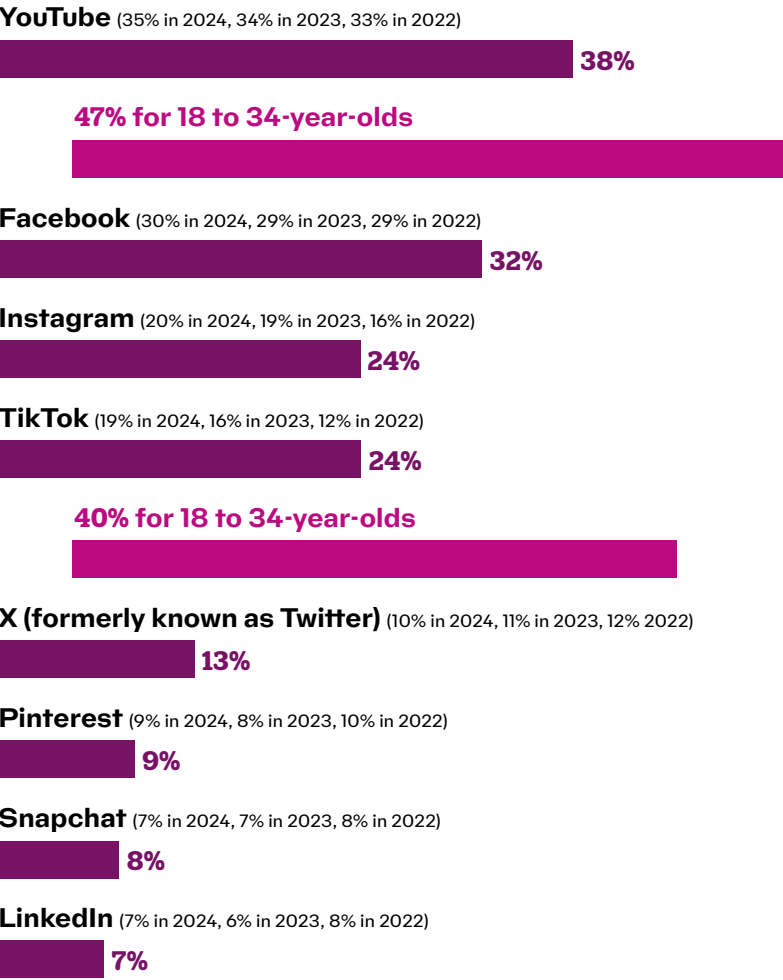
Support from Cats Protection

Cats in summary

Where do we go from here?

Services

Social media platforms being used as sources of information about cats continues to grow.



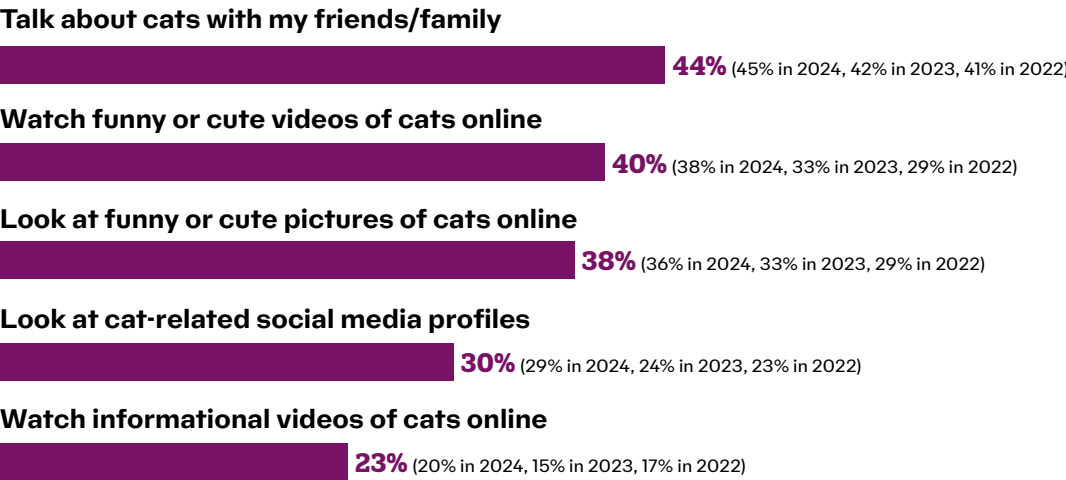
TikTok has surged in popularity as a source of information about cats, particularly for younger owners, and YouTube has also grown in popularity once again. This highlights the growing importance of video content as an effective way to reach cat owners.

“The digital world is increasingly playing a central role in educating, advising and influencing people of all ages. And while social media is of course filled with fun and entertaining content, younger audiences in particular are also using TikTok, YouTube and artificial intelligence tools to search for helpful, instructional and educational content about their everyday lives. Creating content, especially video content, which is borne out of our audience’s existing curiosities, needs or gaps in knowledge is helping us to not only reach more supporters and cat owners, but influence and improve cat welfare at a huge scale.”

**Vicki Greenfield,**  
**Digital Engagement Manager,**  
**Cats Protection**



Top five cat-related activities that owners engage in several times a week or more.



Cat content is increasingly enjoyed by cat owners online, with **78%** saying that they enjoy cute or funny cat-related content at least once a month.

Overall, Facebook and YouTube remain popular sources of ‘fun’ cat-related content (41% for each platform). For younger owners aged 18 to 24 though, Facebook is much less popular (26%), with TikTok being significantly favoured (65%, all cat owners: 36%). Instagram is a close second favourite platform for such content in this younger group (51%, all cat owners: 36%).

“While the internet is full of sweet and funny cat videos, there is sadly a dark side to online cat content. Some viral ‘trends’ we’ve seen can depict cat owners unknowingly causing their cats harm or distress. We’ve also seen content that contains misinformation about cats, which could lead to poor welfare. At the more extreme end, videos containing cat abuse have appeared on multiple social media platforms. In order to help combat this, Cats Protection is a member of Social Media Animal Cruelty Coalition (SMACC). SMACC is a coalition designed to end the proliferation of animal cruelty content on social media by collaborating with the platforms to end the availability, spread and profitability of this content.

“If you come across any cat cruelty content online, make sure to follow SMACC’s five steps to stop online cruelty: be aware of what is cruel, do not watch, do not engage, do not share, and report to the platform.”

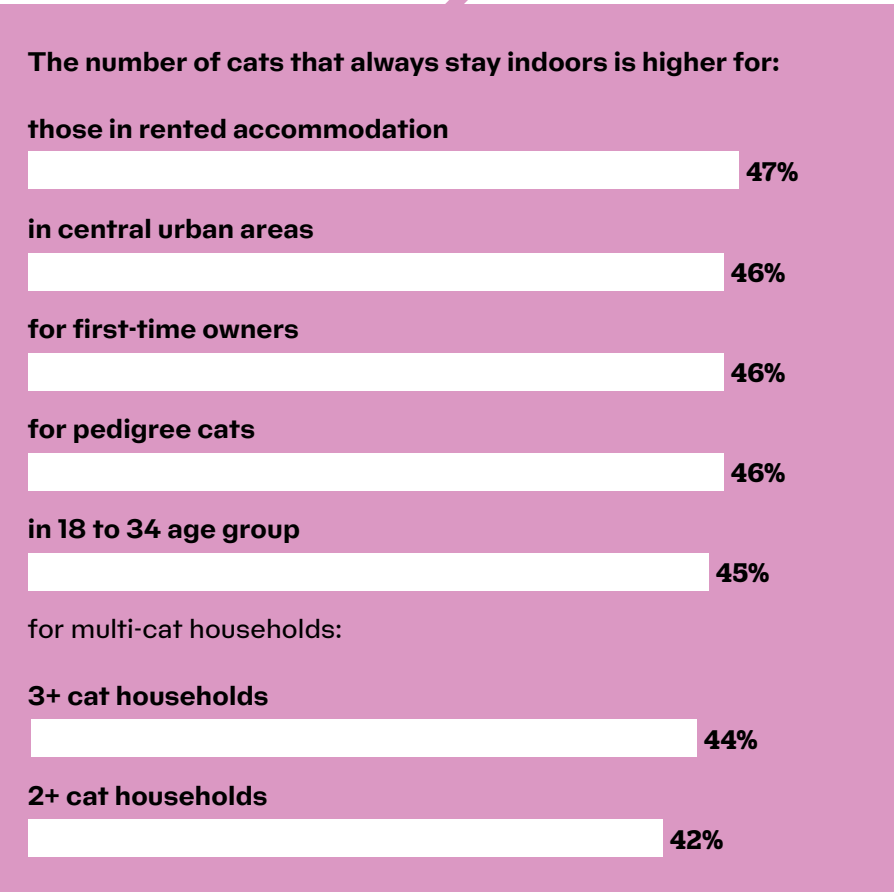
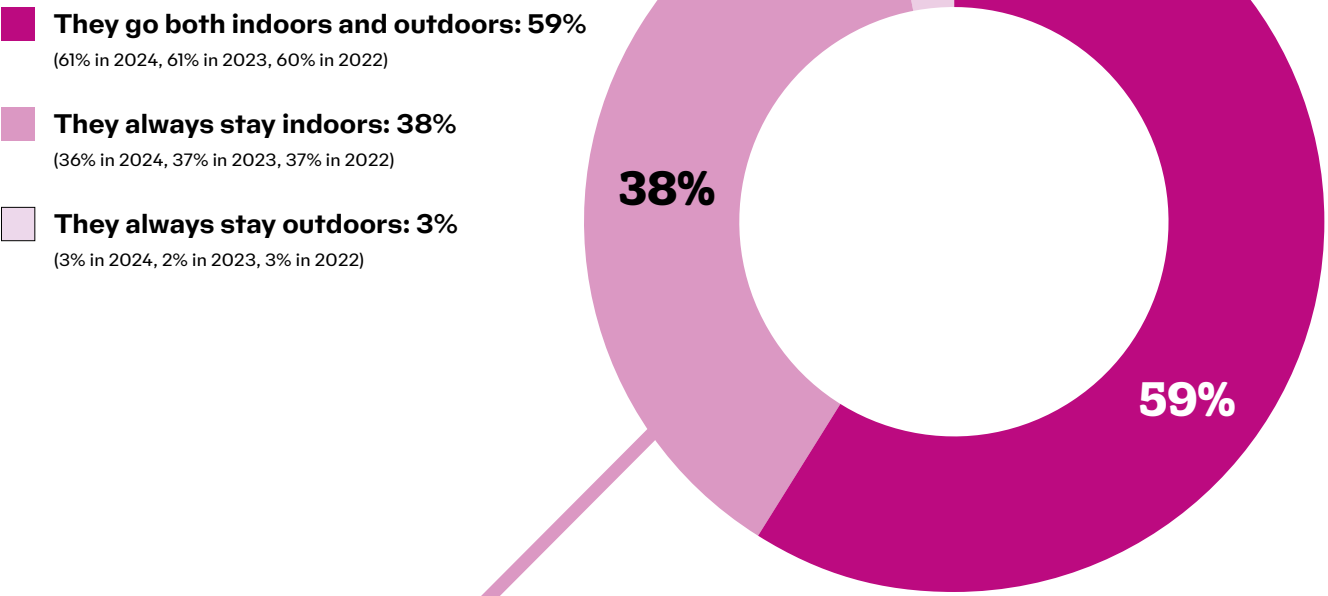
**Jade Emery-Temprano, Advocacy & Campaigns Officer, Cats Protection**



# A cat’s environment

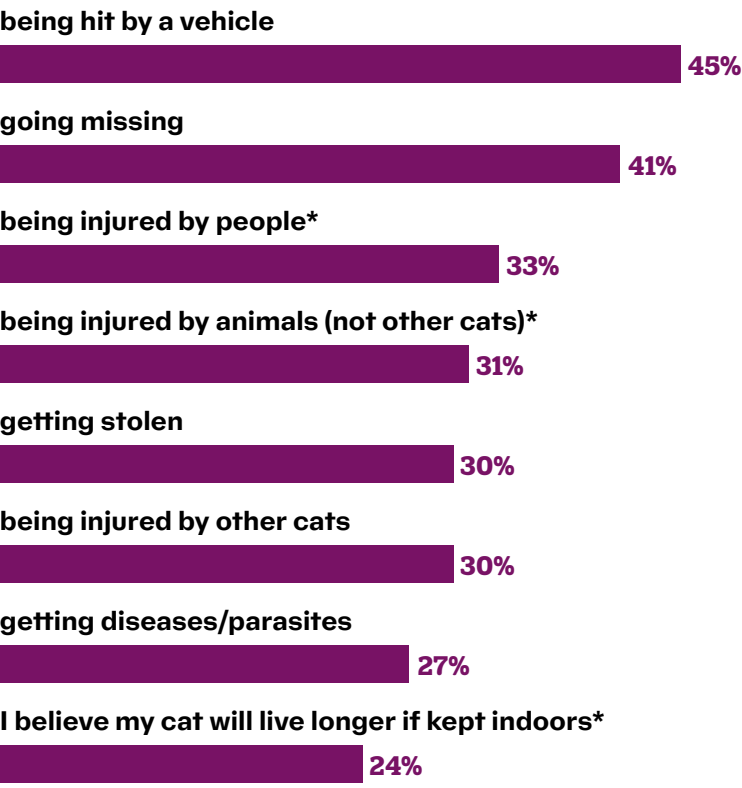
## Indoor versus outdoor cats

Most cats have outdoor access.



Owner concern over harm or disappearance keeps cats indoors.

Concerned about them:



New response options included for this question this year further highlighted just how worried owners are about their cat coming to harm if they are allowed outdoor access. The fact that the activities of people are perceived as a very real threat highlights the importance of educating all members of society about protecting feline welfare, not just those who own and care for cats. Extending length of life was a common reason to keep a cat indoors, yet pedigree cats are more likely to be kept indoors exclusively and have been shown to have shorter average lifespans than moggies\*\*.

Although there isn’t a definite trend for cats to be increasingly kept indoors, pedigree cats are increasingly popular, and they are more likely to be kept exclusively indoors. If trends in pedigree cat ownership continue, we may well see increasing numbers of cats kept exclusively indoors in the future. It’s not always easy to provide for a cat’s essential needs when they live an indoor-only lifestyle, and so owners will likely benefit from advice and guidance here.

\*New response option for 2025.

\*\*Mata F. 2025. Life expectancy of cats in Britain: moggies and mollies live longer. *PeerJ* 13:e18869 <https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.18869>



Preventing harm to cats

**27%** of cats have been injured since being in their owner’s care, similar to last year.



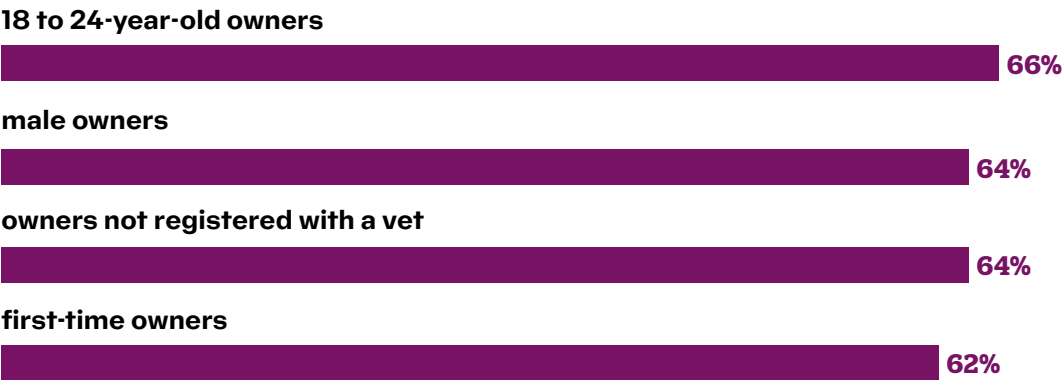
Cat fights remain the most common cause of injury: **15%**

- 8% were involved in a fight with another animal.
- 3% were involved in a road traffic accident.

Cats do not interact and socialise in the same way that some other pet species (such as dogs) do. It is therefore important for owners to understand feline behaviour and do what they can to prevent situations that may lead to conflict between cats. This is especially true for multi-cat households: 5% of cats who got injured did so because of fighting with cats from their own household.

Awareness of lily toxicity among cat owners has not improved: **53%** are still not aware (52% in 2024)

Higher for:



Lily toxicity occurs when a cat eats any part of the lily plant, including pollen that ends up on their coat and the cat licks off while grooming.

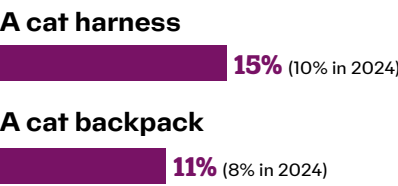
The toxins can cause kidney failure and, in some cases, prove deadly. Ideally owners should totally prevent their cat accessing lilies but if lily toxicity should occur, veterinary care should be sought quickly, as fast treatment can prevent kidney failure.

To increase public awareness, Cats Protection continues to work with relevant organisations across the flower and retail sector to improve the labelling of lilies and other toxic plants.



Cats out and about

The use of accessories to take cats out is increasingly popular.



Cats are a territorial species and prefer to be allowed to choose how they roam, rather than planned leisure outings or excursions away from their familiar home. 41% of cats that have both indoor and outdoor access do so in an unrestricted way. New response options this year gave further insight into the specifics of cats that have outdoor access. 43% have outdoor access during the day, but are kept in overnight, 12% are allowed outdoor access into an outdoor enclosure and 5% only go outdoors on a lead and harness. These more restricted outdoor access lifestyle choices are more common among younger, more affluent owners living in central urban regions.

When a cat does need transporting (for example, for a vet visit), a safe and sturdy cat carrier that is easy to clean should be used. Cat backpacks are often not big enough to allow a cat to sit or stand comfortably, and viewing windows tend to increase stress for cats\*. Harnesses can be uncomfortable for cats or allow escape. Most importantly, cat harnesses prevent the flight response and feeling trapped can significantly escalate stress in cats.

\*cats.org.uk/cats-blog/what-type-of-carrier-is-best-for-my-cat





Many behaviours that owners find a nuisance are completely normal for cats. This includes behaviours such as scratching around the house, which is performed by cats to keep their claws in good condition, relieve stress and scent mark. Cats also like to move vertically within their environment, so jumping onto elevated surfaces is again, an instinctual, normal behaviour. Providing resources such as cat towers, cat shelves and scratching posts can help cats to express these normal behaviours in a way that keeps everyone in the household happy.

Analysing cat behaviour is further complicated by the fact that working out the cause of a specific behaviour can sometimes be difficult. For example, toileting accidents could indicate a urinary tract infection or digestive upset, osteoarthritis or be a sign of stress. This is why any change to cat’s behaviour should be investigated by a vet.

Cats often show signs of stress much earlier than owners recognise however, so it is important that owners are educated on what to look out for, as well as how to avoid stressful situations for their cat in the first place. Ultimately, this is in everyone’s best interest as resultant ‘behavioural problems’ can negatively affect the human-animal bond, even leading to some owners choosing to rehome their cat as a result.

A significant proportion of the rehomed cats were given up because of perceived behavioural ‘problems’.

**My cat kept scratching my furniture/carpets/wallpaper**



**My cat did not get on with other pets in the household**



**My cat behaved aggressively around children**



**My cat behaved aggressively around adults**



**My cat had toileting issues I found too difficult to deal with**

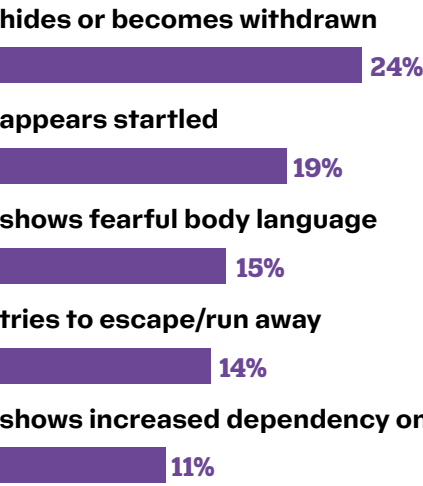


## Fireworks

Fireworks can be very distressing for all animals, including cats.

**65% of cat owners say that their cat has been affected by fireworks.**

Fireworks continue to negatively impact cats. Top five behaviours:





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# Cats and tech

Just as with many areas of modern life, the rise of technology is evident in cat ownership too, as shown by responses to new questions asked this year.

**40%** of cat owners own or use an electronic or ‘smart’ product for their cat.

**Programmable devices**  
(for example, food/water dispenser, cat flap, toys, litter tray)



**Cat-worn GPS tracker**



**Remote monitoring camera**



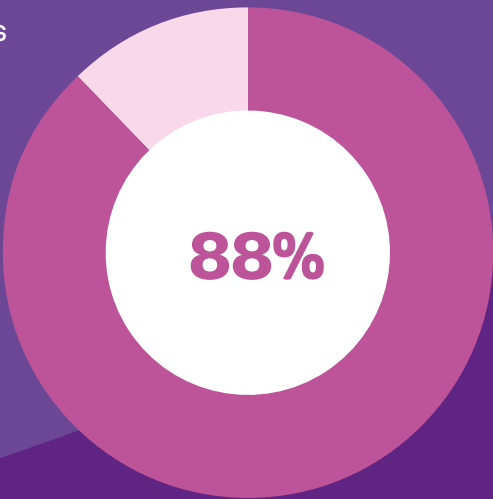
**Dedicated app for cat health/behaviour**



**Cat-worn health tracker**



**88%** of all cat owners have no concerns about using electronic or ‘smart’ technology for their cat.



## Technology: potentially useful for improving the lives of cats, but no replacement for human care and interaction

Anything that helps owners better understand and protect their cats’ health or make their care more convenient is great. There are a few notes of caution that owners should be aware of before trusting technology too much though.

### Tracking devices

These can be hugely reassuring for owners, not to mention giving a fascinating insight into their cats’ movements. Collar or harness-mounted devices can be bulky and uncomfortable for cats to wear though, affecting their ability to enjoy the freedom that trackers are designed to facilitate. They can also be lost or removed if a cat is stolen, and they don’t prevent a cat from becoming lost. This is why trackers should never replace a microchip.

### Programmable devices

Leaning on technology for some aspects of routine cat care can be hugely beneficial for busy cat owners, taking jobs off the to-do list and solving logistical conundrums, such as managing access to essential items for individual cats. Some technological offerings can even improve cat health, including apps that reveal health trends and display insight into how to best care for that cat. However, there have been reports of injury to cats as a result of automated devices such as self-cleaning litter trays\*. It is also during activities like playing and feeding that bonding with your cat takes place, and these are good opportunities to notice subtle changes that might indicate problems.

“Tech should be seen as an aid in providing an enriched life for a cat but should never be viewed as a replacement for appropriate husbandry and human interaction. When choosing a litter tray, be wary of marketing that is primarily designed for humans, instead of the best interests of the cat. Litter trays should be large, private and easy to access. Most cats prefer soft, unscented, sand-sized litter. Funky, modern or more tech-based litter trays may not be ideal toileting sites for cats, due to their shape and potential for movement. Litter trays that aren’t cleaned thoroughly, for example if the deposits are just trapped below, can retain smells that can discourage cats from using the tray.”

**Daniel Warren-Cummings,**  
Central Behaviour Officer,  
Cats Protection



\*[dailymail.co.uk/news/article-13839677/litter-box-company-negative-amazon-reviews-dead-cats.html](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-13839677/litter-box-company-negative-amazon-reviews-dead-cats.html) and [pethelpful.com/pet-news/deadly-self-cleaning-litter-box-design](https://pethelpful.com/pet-news/deadly-self-cleaning-litter-box-design)



# Companionship and challenges to ownership

## Key takeaways



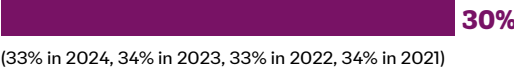
## Why we have cats

The wellbeing benefits of cat ownership are still a strong motivator for having a cat.

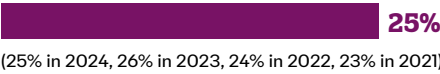
### As company for me/my family



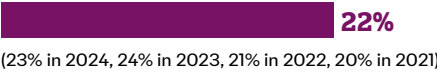
### I've always had cats



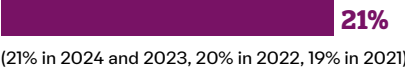
### I grew up with cats and so wanted to get my own when I left home



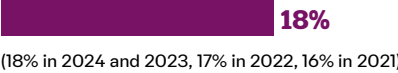
### To help me feel less stressed/anxious



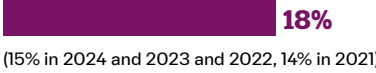
### To help me feel less lonely



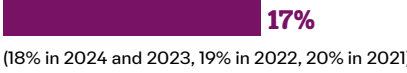
### I've just always wanted cats, so got one as soon as I could



### My child/children wanted one



### They needed looking after/to be taken in



### I wanted a pet animal and thought having a cat would be easier than having a dog



### My partner wanted one/already had one



Once again, companionship, reducing loneliness and reducing stress are collectively the top reasons that people choose to own a cat (55%. 54% in 2024, 55% in 2023, 51% in 2022 and 2021). Owning a cat to combat loneliness is significantly more likely for younger owners (18 to 24: 30%) who are less likely to have partners and/or children, and less likely in those aged over 55 (16%). Cat ownership in this older group is more likely to be due to cat-centric reasons, with 22% of those age 55+ owning a cat because they needed looking after or taking in.

There has been a significant rise in the number of people who own a cat because their children wanted one, reaching 21% for those who acquired a cat in the last year. This figure is understandably higher in the expected age of parents with children still living at home (35 to 54-year-old group: 23%). The benefits of cat ownership are well documented in children, particularly young children\*. These include increased confidence, improved social-emotional development\* and even better health\*\*.

\*Christian H, et al. (2020) Pets are associated with fewer peer problems and emotional symptoms, and better prosocial behavior: Findings From The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children. *J Pediatr.* 220:200-206.e2. doi:10.1016/j.jpeds.2020.01.012

\*\*Scoresby, K.J, et al. (2021). Pet Ownership and Quality of Life: A Systematic Review of the Literature. *Veterinary Sciences.* 8(12), 332. <https://doi.org/10.3390/vetsci8120332>

**92%** of cat owners agreed that they consider their cat part of the family, clearly demonstrating their important position within the household.



**“A home is not a home without a cat.”**

45 to 54-year-old female owner, North West England

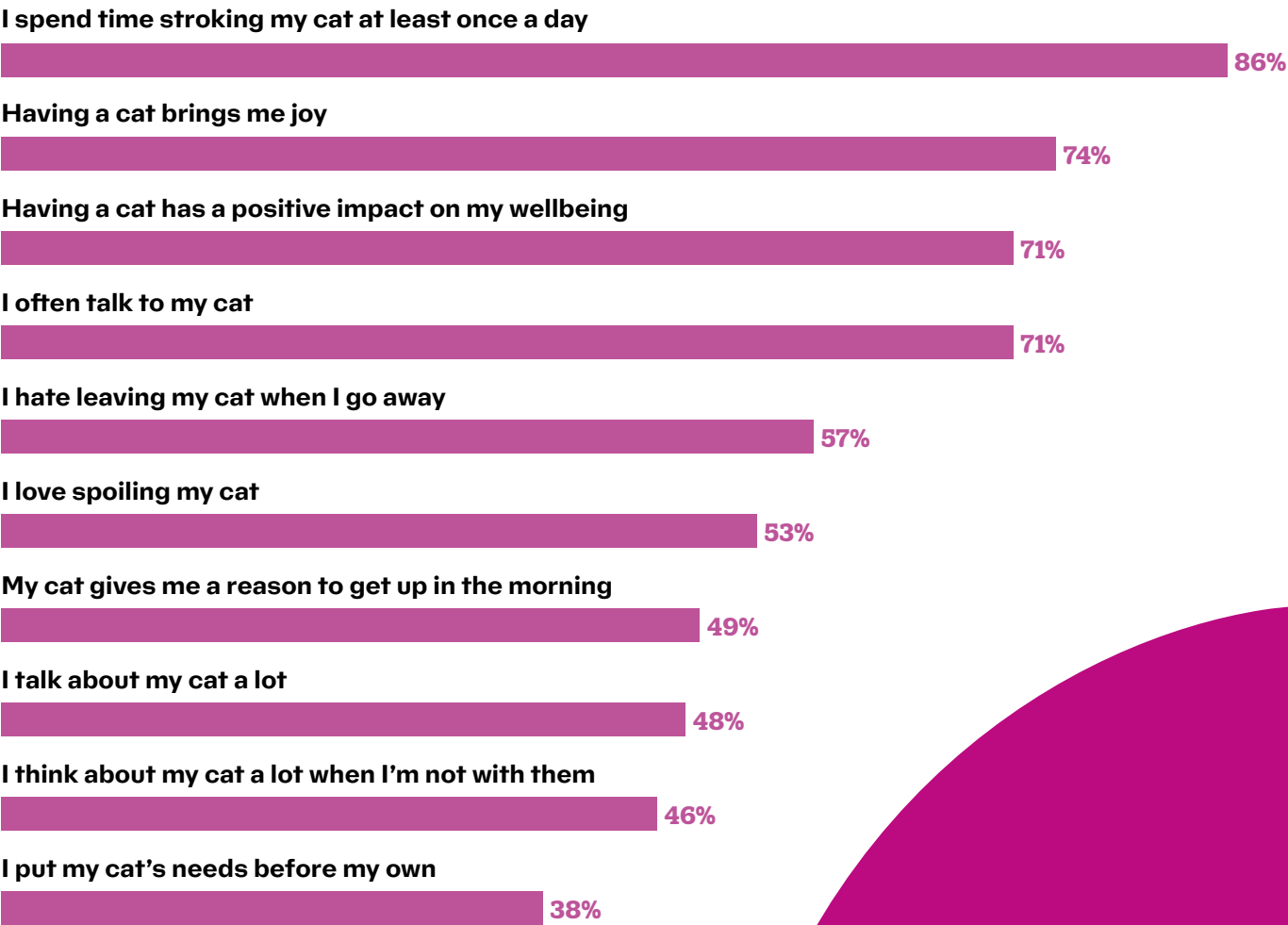
**“My cat is a great companion, especially to the kids.”**

25 to 34-year-old male owner, Greater London

**“Cats are affectionate and make ideal family pets.”**

25 to 34-year-old female owner, South West England

Cat ownership is a hugely important part of people’s lives and wellbeing.



The wellbeing benefits of cat ownership are particularly felt by those who currently live alone (78%) and female owners (77%).

Since 2020, there has been a significant rise in the number of people who own a cat because it gives them joy and a reason to get up in the morning. People report that they talk to, think about and spoil their cat more too. The number of people who say they talk about their cat a lot is also increasing. Simply by being more vocal, these owners may well have a greater potential to influence other owners, so they are an important group to target with appropriate educational messaging.

**“Cats are fun and make the world a better place.”**

45 to 54-year-old female owner, East of England

**“My cat helps me with depression.”**

25 to 34-year-old female owner, Greater London

**“Our cat is a special companion for my family.”**

25 to 34-year-old male owner, North West England

## Barriers to cat ownership

Over 1.5 million households don’t currently own a cat but would like to.

The reasons that people who want to own a cat but can’t right now, are varied.

**Others in my household do not want a cat**



**I can’t afford a cat**



**I have other pets and having a cat would be unsuitable**



**I live in accommodation that is unsuitable for a cat**



**Health reasons specific to having a cat prevent me**



**Having a cat does not fit with my lifestyle**



**I live in rented accommodation and am not allowed a cat**



**I worry about what would happen to my cats after I’m gone**



**Health reasons not specific to having a cat prevent me**



Previous cat owners are choosing not to own cats again for both practical and emotional reasons.

**I don’t want to go through the pain of losing a cat again**



**I have different pets now, instead of cats**



**I can’t afford veterinary care for a cat**



**I don’t feel another cat could replace the one I lost**



**Having a cat does not fit with my current lifestyle (for example, working away a lot)**



**I can’t afford to own a cat now (for example, food, litter)**



**I now live in accommodation that is unsuitable for a cat**



Over half a million households who would like a cat can’t have one due to issues with landlords. In 2024 just over 1,000 cats were taken into Cats Protection because of issues relating to housing.

Affordability is also a major barrier to many potential cat owners. Many prospective owners with potentially good homes for cats may be feeling priced out of cat ownership as we move towards a more affluent demographic of cat owners.



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# Support from Cats Protection

Recognising the importance of cats to their owners and wider society, Cats Protection works hard to support cat owners, especially during particularly challenging times.

This is achieved through various organised initiatives, educational campaigns and political lobbying. To make sure that the support on offer is as effective as possible, Cats Protection maintains a constant focus on the true needs of cats and their owners. This is largely achieved by collecting and analysing information from a variety of data sources, including the annual *CATS Report*.

## Support for people fleeing domestic abuse

Lifeline is a specialist cat fostering service for people experiencing domestic abuse. By ensuring that their cat will be taken care of until they can be safely reunited, Lifeline offers peace of mind about one concern at a very challenging time.

In 2024, Lifeline helped 430 cat owners flee domestic abuse by providing 750 cats with temporary, loving foster homes.

**Find out more about Lifeline at [cats.org.uk/cp-lifeline](https://cats.org.uk/cp-lifeline)**

The National Domestic Abuse Helpline can be contacted via [nationaldahelpline.org.uk](https://nationaldahelpline.org.uk) or on 0808 2000 247.

“We know that, sadly, pet ownership can be a barrier when it comes to leaving domestic abuse, due to fear of what the perpetrator may do to the animal if they are left behind. And, unfortunately, most refuges are unable to take in pets. That’s why our service really is a Lifeline. It gives people peace of mind that we will care for their cats while they flee to safety, and that they will be reunited once they are settled.”

**Amy Hyde, National Lifeline Manager, Cats Protection**



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## Teaching others to make the world better for cats

Education is a core focus for Cats Protection with provisions including in-person and online talks, reliable and accessible online information and topic-led multi-media campaigns. Through our delivery in schools, colleges and targeted digital campaigns, a particular focus on young people helps make sure that owners of the future are well informed about meeting the needs of cats, with the aim of creating lasting positive improvements to cat welfare.

Cats Protection is also proud to be part of the Pet Education Partnership (PEP); a collaborative initiative between the UK’s leading animal welfare organisations, alongside PDSA, RSPCA, Blue Cross, Dogs Trust, Woodgreen, USPCA and SSPCA. Our shared vision is to make animal welfare education accessible to every child aged between five and 11 in the UK, with the ultimate goal of incorporating it into the curriculum.

Find out more at [cats.org.uk/education](https://cats.org.uk/education)

## Ensuring a lifetime of care

Who will take care of my cat after I have gone? It’s a concern that many older owners have. Cat Guardians is a free service from Cats Protection to look after cats who might have no one else and to provide peace of mind for owners for the future. By making sure that a cat’s individual needs are known, this service assures care for a cat after their owner is gone, first in Cats Protection care and then in a new loving home that is perfectly matched to them. It is hoped that by providing this reassurance, people feel more comfortable welcoming a cat into their life during their later years.

In 2024, Cat Guardians cared for and rehomed 202 cats whose owners had passed away, helping 158 supporters.

Find out more about Cat Guardians at [cats.org.uk/catguardians](https://cats.org.uk/catguardians)

## Supporting owners through loss

The Paws to Listen grief support service was established to help owners who face one of the most challenging aspects of cat ownership: losing their cat. This free and confidential service puts grieving owners in contact with trained volunteer listeners who are ready to offer emotional support and practical information for owners whose cats have passed away, gone missing or are separated for other reasons such as rehoming.

In 2024, our Paws to Listen grief support service received 1,610 calls and emails.

Find out more about Paws to Listen at [cats.org.uk/paws-to-listen](https://cats.org.uk/paws-to-listen)

“At Cats Protection we understand the strength of the bond between people and their cats. We know that losing a beloved cat, whatever the circumstances, can be incredibly painful. Sadly, this type of grief isn’t always recognised or understood by society. That’s why our Paws to Listen volunteers are here to provide support and understanding, so no one has to cope with their loss alone.”

Catherine Joyce, Paws to Listen Team Leader, Cats Protection



## Campaigning to improve the lives of cats

We will always drive for change that better protects the health and welfare of cats and their owners. Whether it’s helping support cat ownership by encouraging landlords to stop applying blanket ‘no pet’ policies or calling for regulation of cat breeding, when important legislative conversations are happening, we are the voice for cats.

Find out more about our campaigns at [cats.org.uk/campaigning](https://cats.org.uk/campaigning)



# Cats in summary

## State of the nation

- Cat ownership:

|                  | In millions |      | % of cat-owning households |      |
|------------------|-------------|------|----------------------------|------|
|                  | 2024        | 2025 | 2024                       | 2025 |
| Total UK         | 10.6        | 10.2 | 25%                        | 24%  |
| England          | 9.0         | 8.5  | 25%                        | 24%  |
| Wales            | 0.5         | 0.5  | 24%                        | 24%  |
| Scotland         | 0.8         | 0.7  | 22%                        | 20%  |
| Northern Ireland | 0.2         | 0.2  | 21%                        | 22%  |

- 24% of households in the UK own a cat
- There are 10.2 million owned cats across the UK
- 66% of households own one cat: 34% own two or more cats
- Ownership has increased for 18 to 34-year-olds, declined for 35 to 54-year-olds, and although stable for women and those age 55+, is at its lowest level for these groups since 2020
- A higher proportion of cat owners that have acquired a cat in the last 12 months are in more affluent social groups. 49% of recent cat owners are ‘AB social grade’ or similar (44% in 2024)

## The cat market

- For the first time, for cats acquired in the last 12 months, over half are pedigrees

|                                       | Cats acquired in... |              |              |              |               |                          |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------------------|
|                                       | 2020 to 2021        | 2021 to 2022 | 2022 to 2023 | 2023 to 2024 | the last year | Total pet cat population |
| Moggy/ domestic shorthair or longhair | 51%                 | 47%          | 45%          | 43%          | 38%           | 53%                      |
| Pedigree/ purebred                    | 35%                 | 39%          | 42%          | 45%          | 51%           | 36%                      |

- The proportion of the total pet cat population that is ‘bought’ has continued to increase

|         | Cat was acquired... |      |      |      |      |
|---------|---------------------|------|------|------|------|
|         | 2021                | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
| Bought  | 28%                 | 29%  | 32%  | 34%  | 38%  |
| Adopted | 25%                 | 24%  | 24%  | 24%  | 23%  |

## Veterinary care

- 30% of cat owners say that they have experienced difficulty accessing a vet; significantly more than last year (28%)
- 8% of cats are not registered with a vet
- 57% of owners say that they do not visit the vet as often as they would like
- Neutering numbers have fallen to 82%, continuing a downward trend from 88% in 2020. 1.5 million cats (15%) are not neutered

## Companionship and challenges to ownerships

- The wellbeing benefits of cat ownership are still a strong motivator for having a cat; companionship, reducing loneliness and reducing stress are collectively the top reasons that people choose to own a cat (55%)
- Over 1.5 million households don’t currently own a cat but would like to
- Over half a million households can’t have a cat due to issues with landlords
- 21% of people who had to give up their cat say that affordability is the reason

- Microchipping numbers have stalled, despite the introduction of compulsory pet cat microchipping in England. Across the UK, 74% of cats are microchipped (75% in 2024), 22% are not microchipped
- The proportion of insured cats has increased again to 53% (50% in 2024)
- The proportion of cats that are up to date with vaccinations has risen again to 77% (75% in 2024)

## Cat care, welfare and behaviour

- Cat owners are increasingly researching their cats’ needs both before and after acquisition:
  - 35% of owners did lots of research before getting their cat: (34% in 2024)
  - 35% of owners tend to do lots of research about how best to look after their cat: (32% in 2024)
  - 45% of owners say that they seek information or advice about their cat at least once a month
- Most cats have outdoor access; 38% always stay indoors
- The use of accessories to take cats out is increasingly popular:
  - cat harness: 15% (10% in 2024)
  - cat backpack: 11% (8% in 2024)
- 74% of cats have displayed at least one potential stress behaviour in the last 12 months

# Where do we go from here?

## A message from John May, Chief Executive, Cats Protection

Now in its sixth year, the CATS Report continues to shed light on the evolving world of cats and the people who care for them. It offers vital insight for the animal welfare sector, the veterinary profession, and government, helping us all understand how best to protect and promote feline welfare in a fast-moving landscape.

A key trend is the rise of a younger, often more affluent, generation of cat owners. They care deeply about their pets and are keen to do the right thing. Many turn first to social media for advice, and they're more likely to buy a cat than adopt one, often with a preference for pedigree breeds, including those with known health concerns.

This presents both opportunities and challenges. It's encouraging to see strong emotional investment in cats, and we welcome any owner wanting to do their best. But cats are not small dogs. They have unique behaviours, needs and instincts. From litter trays to territory, companionship to independence, responsible ownership starts with understanding what it truly means to see the world through cats' eyes.

Education is therefore more important than ever. We want to help the whole of the UK public, whether they own a cat, feed a stray, or come across a feral, to understand the needs of all cats. Owned cats, community cats, strays and ferals each require different approaches, but all deserve respect, care and protection. A truly cat-literate nation is one where every feline's welfare is better understood and better safeguarded.

We must also consider how these trends affect rehoming. As adoption rates fall and interest in pedigree cats rises, we may begin to see a shift in the kinds of cats needing our help, including those with complex health or behavioural needs. This demands a new approach to how we connect with potential adopters. .

Using social media more effectively, sharing engaging and informative video content, and telling each cat's unique story in a way that resonates will help us reach today's audiences. Our aim remains the same: to find the right home for every cat, no matter their background.

At Cats Protection, we're responding. We're reviewing how we communicate, expanding our educational work and calling for better regulation of cat breeding. With evidence, compassion and nearly 100 years of experience, we're ensuring our voice is heard.

We can't do this alone. A healthy, balanced cat population will take shared commitment. We are committed to working alongside others across the sector, bringing together our insights, our advocacy, and our care for cats to build a better future for them all.

Whatever stage someone is at in their journey with cats, we're here to help. Because life really is better with cats.

**John May CVO OBE DL, Chief Executive, Cats Protection**



# Services

**General advice and rehoming cats.** A helpline for those with any questions regarding their own cats, or cats in general, and for those looking to adopt a cat or to have theirs rehomed.

**[cats.org.uk/contact-us](https://cats.org.uk/contact-us) or 03000 12 12 12**

**Neutering support.** Providing thousands of people each year with financial assistance for neutering.

**[cats.org.uk/neutering](https://cats.org.uk/neutering)**

**Education talks.** Free talks to schools (curriculum-based) and community groups, advising both adults and children about cat behaviour and responsible pet ownership.

**[cats.org.uk/education](https://cats.org.uk/education)**

**Cat Guardians.** A free service aimed at giving peace of mind to cat owners who are concerned about what might happen if they were to pass away before their cat.

**[cats.org.uk/catguardians](https://cats.org.uk/catguardians) or 01825 741 291**

**Paws to Listen.** A free grief support service run by trained volunteer listeners, for those dealing with the loss of their cat whether through death, going missing or separation.

**[cats.org.uk/paws-to-listen](https://cats.org.uk/paws-to-listen) or 0800 024 9494**

**Lifeline.** A free and completely confidential pet-fostering service for families fleeing domestic abuse.

**[cats.org.uk/cp-lifeline](https://cats.org.uk/cp-lifeline) or 0345 260 1280**



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# Making a better life for cats, because life is better with cats



For further information contact [stats@cats.org.uk](mailto:stats@cats.org.uk) or visit [cats.org.uk/stats](https://cats.org.uk/stats)

Cats Protection is a registered charity 203644 (England and Wales), SC037711 (Scotland) and is listed as a Section 167 institution by the Charity Commission of Northern Ireland.  
Registered office: National Cat Centre, Chelwood Gate, Haywards Heath, Sussex, RH17 7TT

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