



ISSUES IN FOCUS

2014





PDSA's history dates back to 1917. During that time the charity has had a huge impact on animal health and welfare across the UK, providing around 100 million free treatments to more than 20 million sick and injured pets. Today, PDSA's work goes beyond just treating pets in its 51 Pet Hospitals UK-wide; the charity is a leading authority on pet wellbeing and is committed to providing education on all aspects of responsible pet ownership through a variety of initiatives.



YouGov is one of the UK's leading research companies, providing accurate insights into what people are thinking and doing all over the world, all of the time. The most quoted research agency in the UK, YouGov has an established track record of consistently accurate and high-quality survey data, representing all ages, socio-economic groups and other demographic types. YouGov is delighted to be involved in the fourth *PDSA Animal Wellbeing (PAW) Report*, monitoring changes in pet welfare issues across the UK.

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INTRODUCTION



Richard Hooker, BVMS (Hons), MRCVS
PDSA Director of Veterinary Services

It has been nearly four years since we launched the first ever PAW Report, in conjunction with YouGov. Since then, we have surveyed over 21,000 pet owners, veterinary professionals and children. The Report continues to provide a unique and comprehensive insight into animal wellbeing in the UK. Through annual monitoring we can ensure that our education programmes and campaigns focus on the biggest issues facing pets in the UK today to help make the biggest possible difference.

At PDSA, we are resolute in using education to affect positive behaviour change. For us it's about using our expertise to support owners and work with them to safeguard the physical and mental wellbeing of their pets.

On a daily basis, veterinary teams and animal welfare organisations across the UK do such wonderful work. Despite this, there is still a huge task ahead because there are still millions of pets whose welfare needs are not being met.

There is no doubt that pets are held dear in the public's affection; pets are loved ... but we can see from our findings that there are still key areas of pet ownership that need further work.

As well as sharing our latest findings we are also challenging pet lovers everywhere to help provide an even deeper understanding of the UK pet nation by taking part in the biggest ever online pet survey at pdsa.org.uk/bigpetsurvey

... we are resolute in using education to affect positive behaviour change ...

The more people who take part, the more we can learn about UK pets and understand the challenges we all face to safeguard their health and happiness.



... there are still millions of pets whose welfare needs are not being met

THE FIVE WELFARE NEEDS

What are the five welfare needs and why do they matter?

The five needs are:



Environment

the need for a suitable environment (place to live)



Diet

the need for a suitable diet



Behaviour

the need to be able to express normal behaviour



Companionship

the need to live with, or apart from, other animals



Health

the need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease

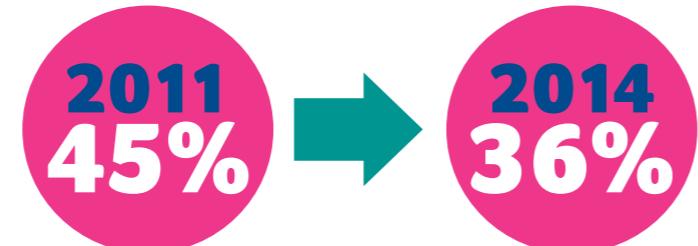
Why do they matter?

The Animal Welfare Acts* introduced a 'duty of care' for all pet owners to meet the welfare needs of their pets. These requirements were split into five areas, which act as a simple framework to help owners meet their pets' needs and ensure that their pets are both physically and mentally healthy and happy.



* When referring to the Animal Welfare Acts, this includes the Animal Welfare Act 2006 covering the whole of England and Wales, the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 that applies to Scotland, and the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 that covers Northern Ireland.

% of owners familiar with the Animal Welfare Acts and the five welfare needs within them:



Find out more in Pet Ownership, page 34

VITAL STATISTICS

Pets play a massive role in people's lives. These statistics show just how much the UK loves its pets.

51% OF HOUSEHOLDS HAVE A PET
13.5 MILLION HOUSEHOLDS HAVE A PET

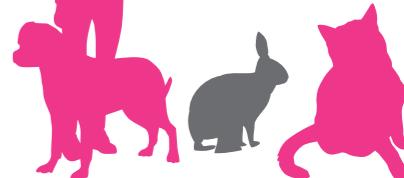
24% HAVE A CAT WITH AN ESTIMATED POPULATION OF 10.5 MILLION CATS

24% HAVE A DOG WITH AN ESTIMATED POPULATION OF 8.1 MILLION DOGS

3% HAVE ONE OR MORE RABBITS WITH AN ESTIMATED POPULATION OF 1.3 MILLION RABBITS

This year we have surveyed:

1,069 PET OWNERS



**572 VETS
VET NURSES
AND FOR THE FIRST TIME
VETERINARY AND
VETERINARY NURSING
STUDENTS**

... to gain an insight into how well pets' welfare needs are being met.

ISSUES IN FOCUS



ISSUE 1: Pet Obesity

Pet obesity levels continue to rise with 80% of veterinary professionals believing there will be more overweight pets than healthy weight pets in five years' time and 4 out of 5 veterinary professionals report having seen an increase in levels of pet obesity over the last 2 years. This section explores the importance of an appropriate diet for a pet's lifestage, species and health, as well as how to prevent obesity-related diseases.



ISSUE 2: Problem Behaviours

With 62% of pet owners having been concerned or frightened by another dog's behaviour and over 30% having been bitten or attacked by a dog, it is evident that this issue which costs the NHS over £3 million a year, needs more focus. This section looks at the common problem behaviours displayed by our pets, the significance of destructive or aggressive behaviour, and also focuses on the importance of exercise in helping to improve some behaviour issues.

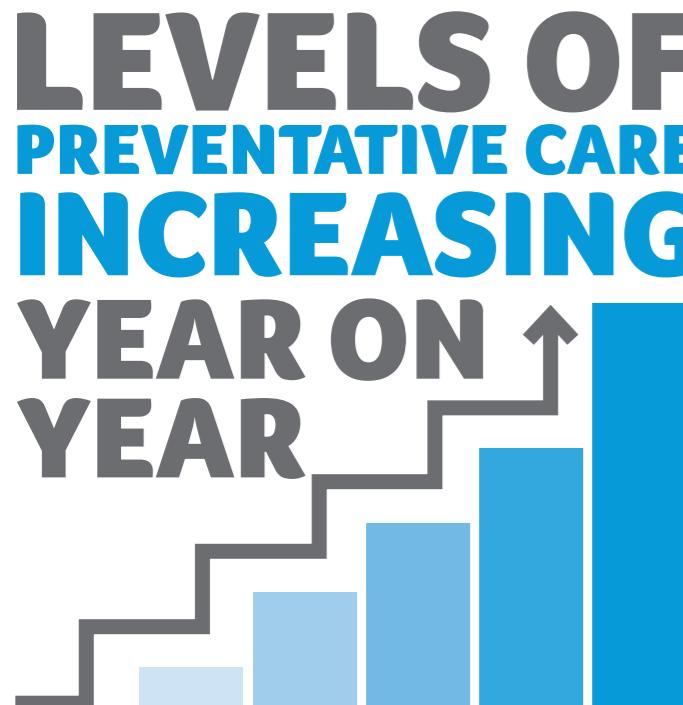


ISSUES IN FOCUS



ISSUE 3: Preventative Care

It is better news in this area with levels of preventative care increasing year on year and 96% of pet owners have not reduced their spend on preventative healthcare due to the current economic climate. In this section, we consider the importance of preventative treatments to protect pets from pain, suffering, injury and disease. We'll look at what factors influence people in their choice of veterinary practice and also provide pet owners opinions on vets in the UK today.



96% PET OWNERS HAVE NOT REDUCED THEIR SPEND ON PREVENTATIVE CARE

A graphic icon consisting of a grey circle containing a white dog collar. Inside the circle is a crossed-out downward-pointing arrow, indicating that spending has not decreased.



ISSUE 4: Pet Ownership

The final issue in focus in this Report is the challenge faced by pet owners to provide everything their pets need, from choosing the right pet in the first place, to understanding lifetime costs, and becoming familiar with their duty of care under the Animal Welfare Acts,* all of which ensure health and happy pets and owners. 86% of pet owners believe owning a pet improves their lives and 4 out of 5 pet owners feel physically or mentally healthier because of their pet.

86% OF OWNERS BELIEVE OWNING A PET IMPROVES THEIR LIVES

A graphic featuring a large yellow thumbs-up icon. Inside the thumbs-up is a small silhouette of a person walking a dog. To the left of the thumbs-up, the text '86% OF OWNERS BELIEVE OWNING A PET IMPROVES THEIR LIVES' is displayed in bold, yellow and grey letters.

4 OUT OF 5 PET OWNERS FEEL PHYSICALLY OR MENTALLY HEALTHIER BECAUSE OF THEIR PET

A graphic showing five silhouettes of people walking dogs. Four of the people are yellow silhouettes, and one is a grey silhouette. To the left of the silhouettes, the text '4 OUT OF 5 PET OWNERS FEEL PHYSICALLY OR MENTALLY HEALTHIER BECAUSE OF THEIR PET' is displayed in bold, yellow and grey letters.

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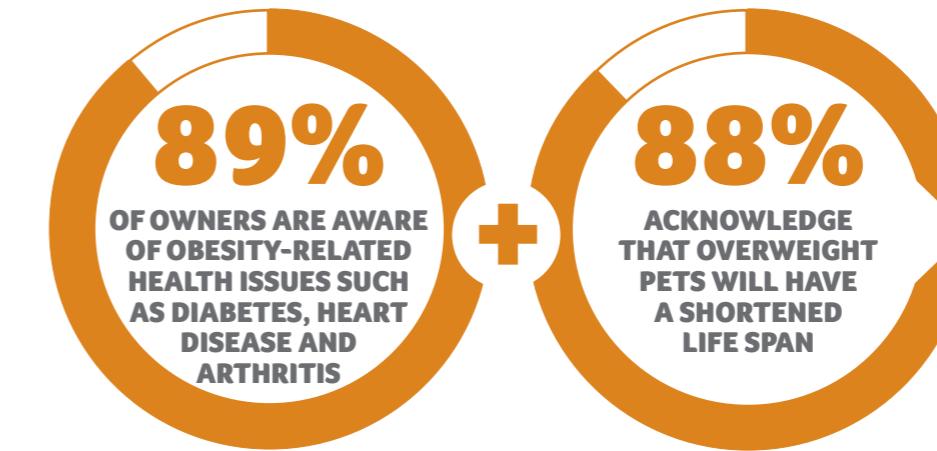


DIET: IN FOCUS

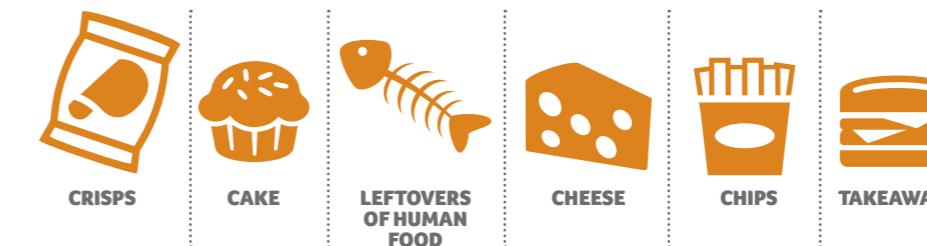


Pet Obesity

Pets require a balanced diet appropriate to their species, lifestage and health. This year's Report however, as with previous years, shows us that too many people are continuing to feed their pets inappropriate foods, such as fatty treats and leftovers. The consequence of this is that ...



**OVER 5.5 MILLION PETS
GET TREATS AS PART OF THEIR DAILY DIET INCLUDING:**



“ VOICE OF THE PROFESSION ”

81%
of veterinary professionals have seen an increase in levels of pet obesity over the last two years

YET ...

THE UK IS STILL IN THE GRIP OF A PET OBESITY CRISIS



Pet obesity is entirely preventable but with over 2 million owners giving treats because their pets beg for them, the solution is dependent on owner willpower and better understanding of the right diets for their beloved companions.



DIET: IN FOCUS



Before



After

CASE STUDY

Ruby

Jack Russell Terrier Ruby used to tip the scales at 9.1kg (1 stone 6lbs), making her morbidly obese at more than 50% overweight. A former stray, Ruby was 'spoilt rotten' to compensate for her tough start in life. But all the snacks and titbits led to unhealthy weight gain: she struggled to walk and had no energy. But thanks to PDSA's Pet Fit Club, she shed an impressive one-third of her bodyweight by following a tailored diet and exercise plan.

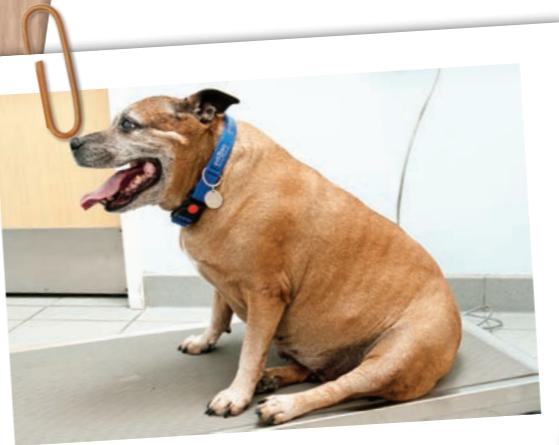
The difference in Ruby since losing weight is amazing. She is like a completely transformed dog – so much happier and with lots more energy, showing that with a bit of determination, anything is possible.



CASE STUDY

TJ

With painful arthritis, Staffordshire Bull Terrier TJ used to refuse to go on walks, and tipped the scales at a huge 34kg (5 stone 5lb), about 70% over her ideal weight. But life has dramatically changed for this 15-year-old dog and her determined owner, following weight loss of around 8kg. She is now a much slimmer 26kg (4 stone 2lb) and loves walking again. Her arthritic symptoms are also greatly reduced, ensuring she can really enjoy her senior years.



Before



After

How much should I feed?

Portion sizes – is it just “common sense”?

As human waistlines expand, a similar picture is occurring in our pet population.

When considering how much to feed their pet, many owners seemingly still rely on “common sense” or past experience to make a decision.

It sounds obvious, but if our pets eat too much they will become overweight. If you feed your pet a ‘complete’ food, then the food is just that – complete! It contains everything your pet needs.

So as soon as you feed anything extra, such as treats, your pet’s body must do something with the extra calories. Most of these calories will turn into fat. A pet’s age, weight and body shape, energy requirements, alongside packet feeding guidelines and veterinary advice should all be taken into account when deciding how much to feed.

Regular exercise involving play, walking and running (with dogs) is also essential for a pet’s health – food and fitness are the two essential factors in achieving a healthy shape for your pet.



The main sources of information used when deciding how much to feed:



DOG OWNERS

21%
Dog's weight or body shape

20%
Past experience

18%
Veterinary professionals



CAT OWNERS

27%
Common sense

21%
Past experience

14%
Veterinary professionals



RABBIT OWNERS

29%
Common sense

26%
Past experience

19%
Veterinary professionals

ADVICE POINT

With **82%** of veterinary practices offering weight clinics and dietary advice, visit your vet practice for information or find out more about PDSA's Pet Fit Club and help your pet lose weight today.
pdsa.org.uk/petfitclub





DIET: IN FOCUS

Diet Improvements

It isn't all diet disasters though: since 2011 it is great to see the significant improvements in rabbit diets with around 300,000 fewer rabbits being fed muesli-type foods (which can lead to painful dental disease) and nearly 200,000 more rabbits being fed the right amount of hay.



Thanks to initiatives such as Rabbit Awareness Week (RAW), which PDSA supports, awareness and understanding of healthy rabbit diets are improving. To find out more about RAW, visit www.rabbitawarenessweek.co.uk

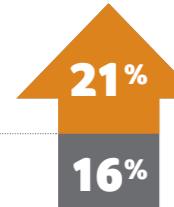


Dog owners feeding dog based on body weight or shape

✓ **POSITIVE IMPROVEMENT**

2014

21%



2011

Owners feeding rabbit muesli as one of their rabbits' main types of food

✓ **POSITIVE IMPROVEMENT**

2014

25%

2011

49%



Rabbit owners who don't feed enough hay (feeding less than the rabbits' body size in hay or grass each day)

✓ **POSITIVE IMPROVEMENT**

2014

27%

2011

42%



Views on Pet Obesity

There will be more overweight pets than healthy weight pets in five years' time

Vets and Vet Nurses



80%

Pet Owners



42%

Severely overweight pets should be removed from an owner if owners persistently ignore veterinary advice

Vets and Vet Nurses



73%

Pet Owners



60%

Not enough information is available to help owners understand pets' dietary requirements

Vets and Vet Nurses



52%

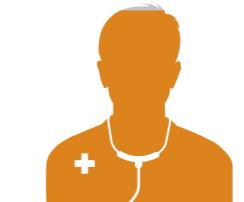
Pet Owners



38%

Owners have overall responsibility to learn about their pets' dietary needs

Vets and Vet Nurses



96%

Pet Owners



94%



Will there be more overweight pets than healthy weight pets in five years time?

Is there enough information available to help you understand how much food your pet needs?

Share your thoughts on Facebook or Twitter. #pawreport





BEHAVIOUR: IN FOCUS

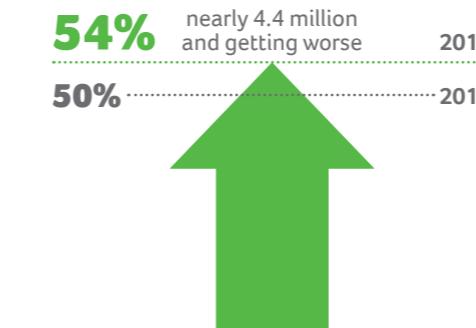


Behaviour Statistics

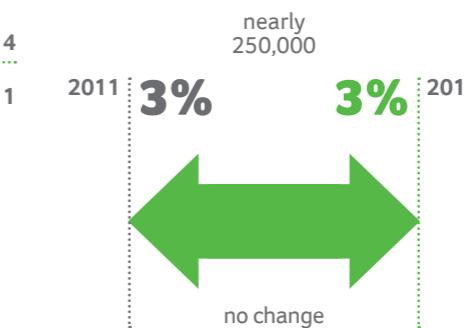
Our latest research shows that, sadly, little has changed when it comes to problem behaviour. There are still millions of un-socialised and untrained dogs in the UK, with many displaying problem behaviours. These signs can often be a cry for help from our canine companions, and if not spotted and addressed, can quickly lead to more serious problems.



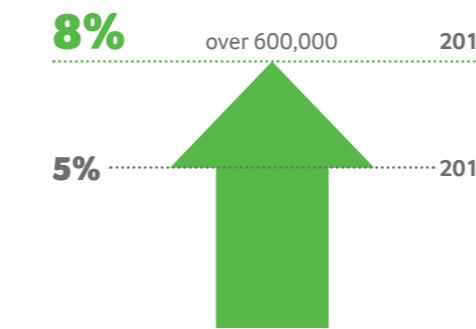
Dogs that never attended training classes in their first 6 months of life



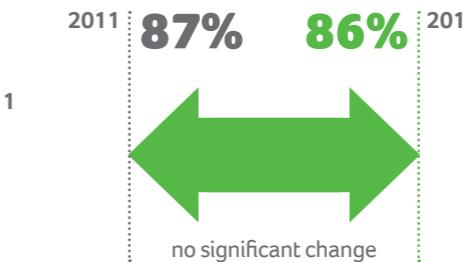
Dogs showing aggression towards people



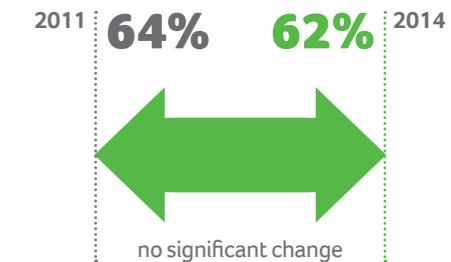
Dogs showing aggression towards other pets



Pet owners who think people should face tougher penalties if their dog attacks another person or animal



Pet owners who have been frightened or concerned by another dog's behaviour



BEHAVIOUR: IN FOCUS

Socialisation and Training

In the last two years, over half of veterinary professionals have seen an increase in dog-on-dog attacks as well as dog euthanasia due to behavioural issues. This is truly heartbreakingly. But this can be prevented if pet owners invest time in two key areas:

Socialisation – where a puppy is gradually exposed to a wide range of everyday sights and sounds, people and other pets, to develop their confidence. This important stage in a dog's life can be the difference between a well rounded, confident dog, and one that develops problem behaviours.

Around **1.5 million** dogs in the UK have not been properly socialised as puppies.



75%
OF PET OWNERS

believe a lack of positive experiences as puppies leads to more aggressive dogs yet many still aren't investing time in socialisation



82%
OF PET OWNERS

believe that aggressive behaviour is a result of inappropriate or inadequate training by the owner

*In the last two years, over half of veterinary professionals have seen an **increase** in dog-on-dog attacks as well as dog euthanasia due to behavioural issues*

VOICE OF THE PROFESSION

Boredom And Exercise

A bored and lonely dog is not a happy dog. Leading an unstimulating, inactive and lonely life can often contribute to destructive behaviours such as chewing furniture, prolonged periods of barking and inappropriate toileting in the house. Some dogs may also display compulsive behaviours, such as excessive licking. Our research shows that many dogs are displaying these behaviours on a weekly basis. Some will be bored while others will be suffering from separation anxiety and a failure to cope with their owner's absence. With millions of dogs left alone for longer than five hours every day, these problems may be significantly under-recognised.



So what can be done? Exercise is the key.

Lack of exercise contributes to frustration and boredom, as well as health problems. Exercise is not only a significant stress-reliever, but is also essential to the physical and mental wellbeing of dogs.

A staggering 2.4 million dogs in the UK are not given the opportunity to exercise off the lead outside the home or garden on a daily basis – with over **800,000** of these dogs **never** going for walks off the lead, and **250,000 never going for walks at all**.

For those dogs that do go for walks, **81%** are walked for less than an hour, with only **19%** having a regular exercise routine that lasts for more than an hour.

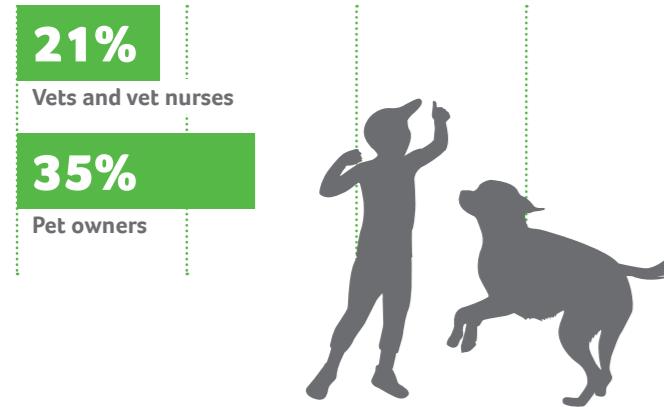
ACTION NEEDED!

Exercising in a garden is not enough for dogs. They need their walks not only for the physical benefits that daily exercise brings, but for the mental stimulation too. Being out and about allows them to express normal behaviours, such as sniffing, investigating and interactions with other pets and people.

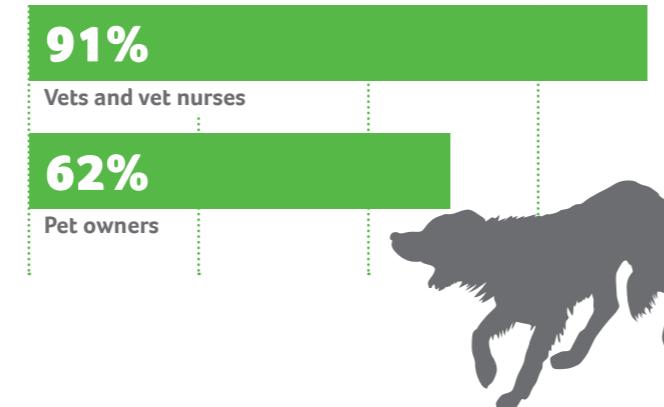


Views on behaviour

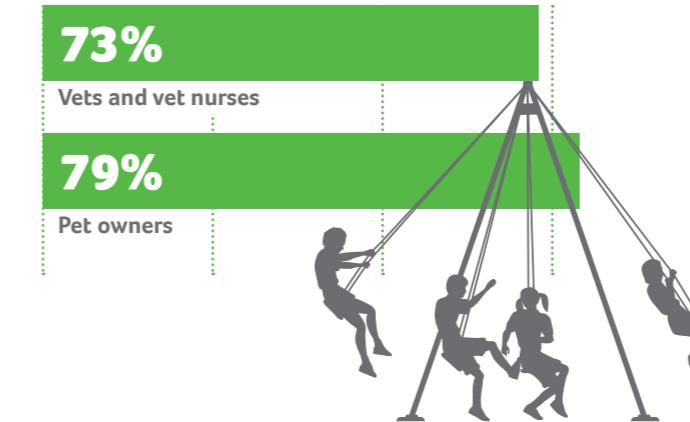
It is acceptable to leave a child unattended with a dog



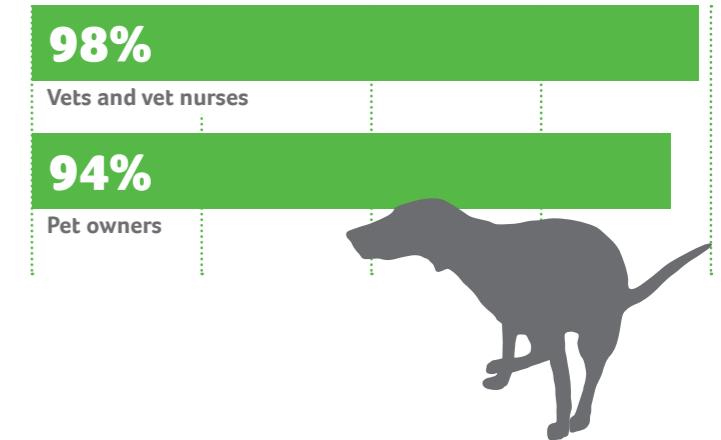
I have been frightened or concerned by a dog's behaviour



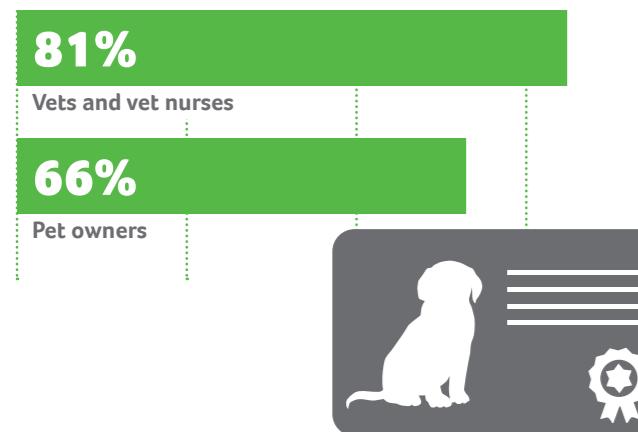
Children's play areas should be dog-free zones



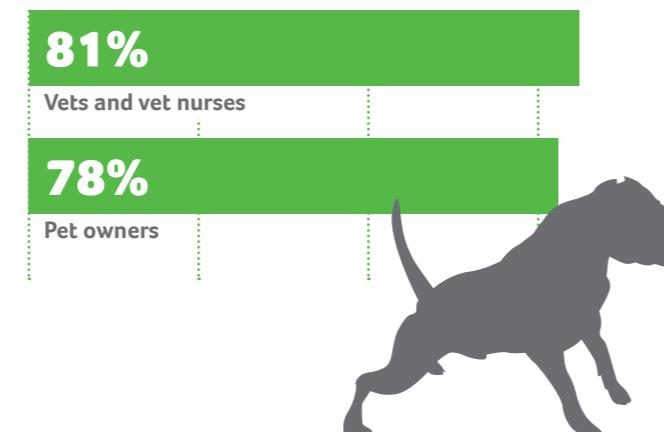
Owners must take full responsibility for their dog's behaviour



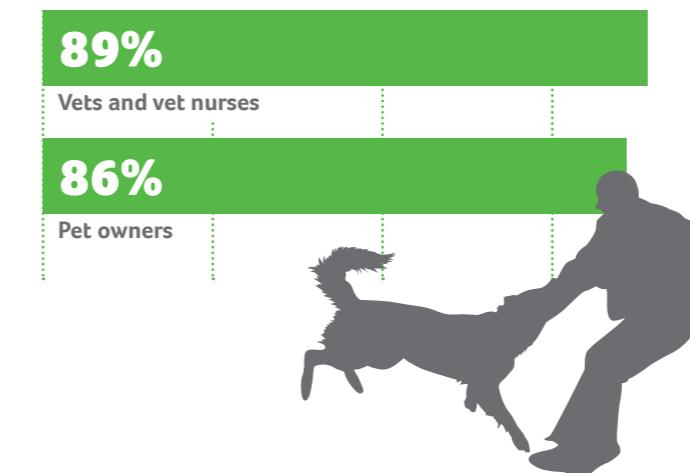
Dog licenses should be introduced



HM Government should take the issue of dangerous dogs more seriously



Owners should face tougher penalties if their dog attacks another person or animal



Do you agree that dog licenses should be introduced? Would you leave your child alone with your dog?
Share your thoughts on Facebook or Twitter #pawreport





HEALTH: IN FOCUS



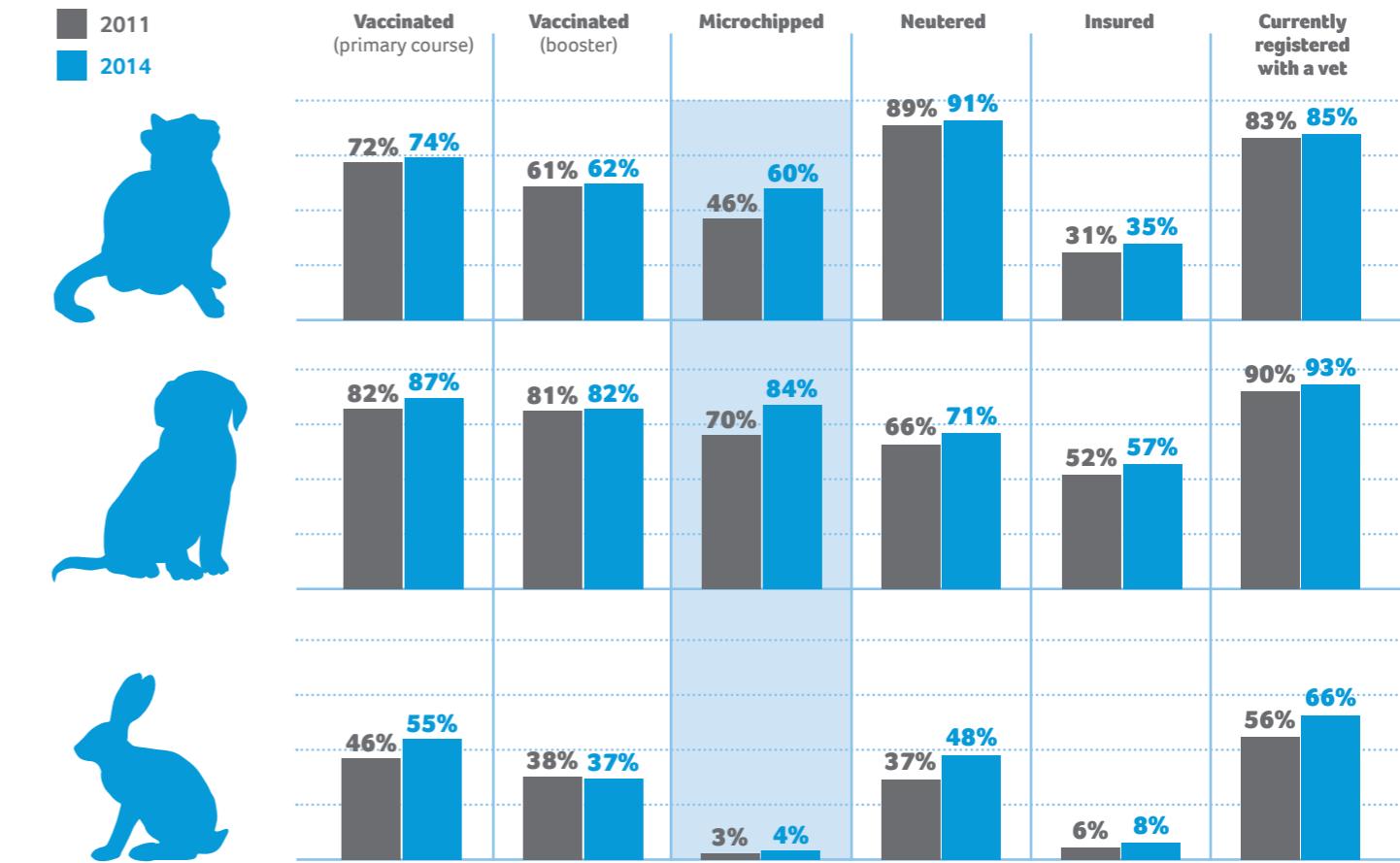
Preventative Healthcare

Year on year we are becoming a more responsible pet loving nation when it comes to pet healthcare. Preventative treatments such as vaccinations and neutering are being provided for even more pets. But there is still more to be done to protect our pet nation from deadly diseases and ensure high protection levels.

Pets that don't receive preventative health treatments are at serious risk of developing life-threatening conditions.

MICROCHIPPING

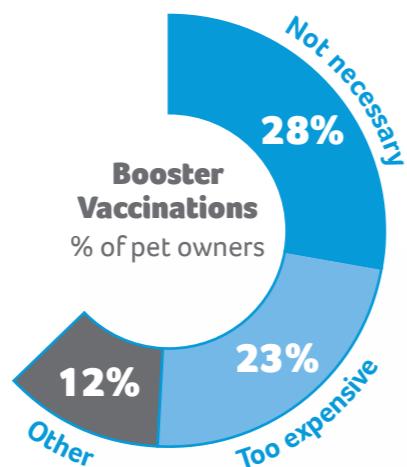
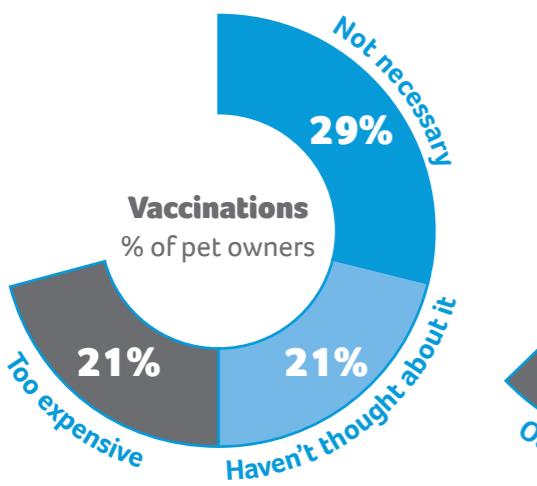
Despite the significant increase in levels of microchipped pets, only 66% of dog owners are aware that microchipping will soon be compulsory in England and Wales. Microchipping is already compulsory in Northern Ireland and in Scotland it is still under consultation.



Vaccinations

Vaccinations protect against various diseases which can cause pain, distress and are often fatal. 79% of pets have received primary vaccinations and 69% have received annual vaccination boosters. But that still leaves millions of unvaccinated pets. So why are some pet owners choosing not to vaccinate?

Top 3 reasons for not vaccinating across all pet owners:



Pets will **always** be at risk from illness and disease if not vaccinated. Many of the preventable diseases seen in pets can survive in the environment for months at a time.


ADVICE POINT

If your pet gets stressed during a trip to the vets, call your practice to discuss other options as many practices offer home visits, or can provide advice to help.

Neutering

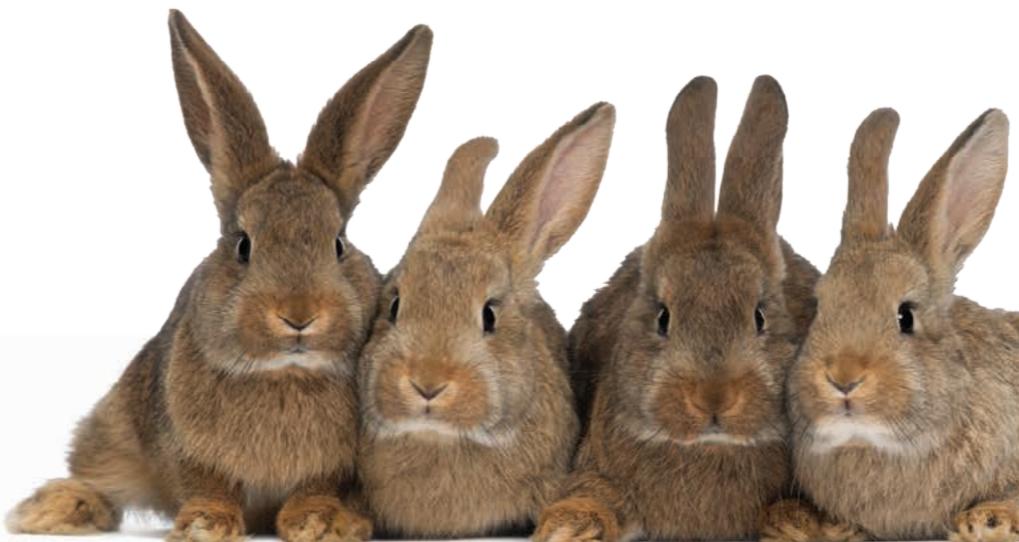
This is another area of improvement with more neutered pets in the UK than ever before.

41% of owners who haven't neutered their pet say it is because they are never out unsupervised so won't get pregnant or chase after other animals. Sadly there are still hundreds of thousands of unwanted animals in need of homes, and neutering does help to stop this growing problem.

But equally importantly, neutering reduces the risk of our pets developing serious, often fatal, diseases such as pyometra, breast cancer, ovarian cancer, testicular cancer and prostatic disease.

“ This report provides useful statistics relating to UK pet cat neutering which can be used to inform strategies designed to reduce the number of unplanned litters. ”

Dr Jane Murray, Cats Protection Research Fellow, University of Bristol



VOICE OF THE PROFESSION

When surveyed, veterinary professionals reported that they have seen an **increase** in pyometras, a potentially fatal womb infection, over the last two years. This condition is **entirely preventable through neutering**

neutering reduces the risk of
PYOMETRA
BREAST CANCER
OVARIAN CANCER
TESTICULAR CANCER
PROSTATIC DISEASE

ADVICE POINT

Kittens should normally be neutered at **4 months of age**, though some will be neutered earlier than this.
Rabbits should normally be neutered at **3 months (males)** and **4 months (females)**. **Dogs** are often neutered at around **6 months**. Ask your vet when the best time for your pet is.

Preventing Parasites

Cats and dogs should be given regular treatments to prevent them suffering from fleas and worms. Worms can also be harmful to owners, which is another reason why treatment is so important.

'Off the shelf' flea and worm treatments bought from pet shops and supermarkets may not be as safe or effective as those from veterinary practices.

NEVER USE A DOG FLEA TREATMENT ON CATS, AS THIS CAN BE FATAL

Flea products intended for dogs can be fatal if given to cats due to a highly toxic insecticide called **permethrin**. Cats can even be poisoned through contact with dogs in the same household that have been recently treated with flea spot-on products containing permethrin. If cats and dogs live together, avoid these products where possible.

International Cat Care is petitioning to change the rules so that permethrin-containing flea products would legally require verbal advice at the point of sale from a suitably qualified person. **71% of pet owners we surveyed agreed with this – do you?** If so, join the campaign today at www.icatcare.org/permethrin/petition

“Permethrin poisoning is still happening and it is almost all accidental. How sad to lose a cat because you were trying to do the right thing by treating for fleas. PDSA has done a great deal to help keep permethrin poisoning in people's minds and supported our campaign, and hopefully between us we have saved cats from poisoning and owners from much heartache. But we can't be complacent – people need to know about permethrin and cats. **”**

Claire Bessant – Chief Executive, International Cat Care



87% + 81%
OF DOGS OF CATS
ARE TREATED FOR WORMS
3 MILLION
PETS NOT PROTECTED

81% + 86%
OF DOGS OF CATS
ARE TREATED FOR FLEAS
3 MILLION
PETS NOT PROTECTED



CASE STUDY

Scratchy

Scratchy the kitten almost died after he was poisoned by licking some flea product containing permethrin off the fur of his canine companion, a Doberman called Coco. Scratchy needed emergency treatment to save his life. Thankfully, treatment was successful and Scratchy was able to go home within 24 hours of being admitted. He was one of the lucky ones, many cats are unable to be saved.

VOICE OF THE PROFESSION
“95%
of vets believe that dog flea treatments containing permethrin should only be sold by suitably qualified persons and should not be available off the shelf**”**

Vets and Pets

More than 2.5 million pets are still not registered with a vet with 35% of these owners stating it is because they feel they can **just turn up** if necessary and 28% saying their **pet is fine** so there is **no need**.

This year we also asked pet owners who are registered with a vet what influenced their choice of veterinary practice and the top 3 reasons for choosing a veterinary practice were:

**1 NEAREST
TO ME**

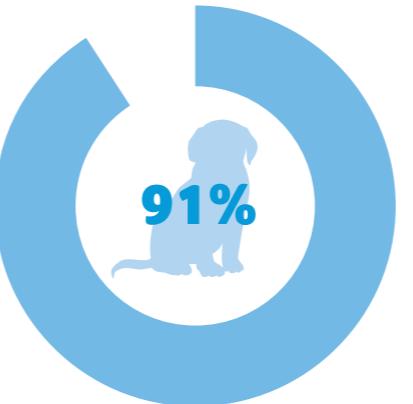
**2 BEST
REPUTATION**

**3 FRIENDS
USE IT**

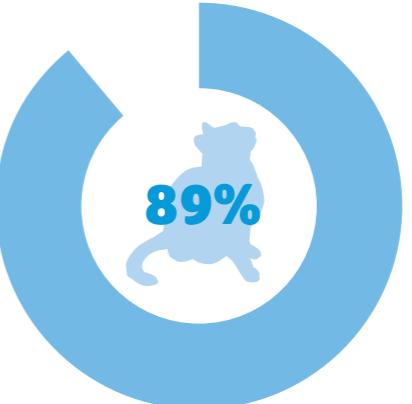


We also asked what actions, if any, pet owners would take in an emergency situation with their pet.

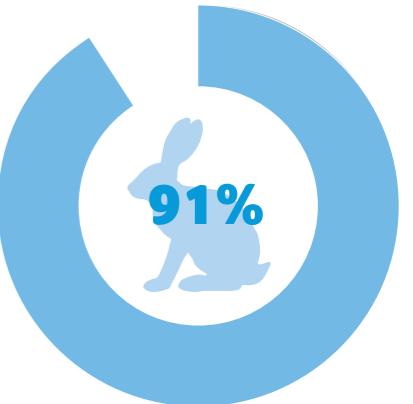
Reassuringly, most pet owners would contact their vet first:



Dog owners



Cat owners



Rabbit owners

Cat and rabbit owners then search online for advice while dog owners perform first aid.

“It is reassuring to know that pet owners see the value of contacting their vet for emergency advice, but practices can help pet owners in many other ways, from advice on preventing diseases to provision of safe and effective flea and worm treatments. We would encourage all pet owners to register with a vet and keep their pets in the best possible shape.”

Nicola Martin, Head of Pet Health and Welfare, PDSA



PET OWNERSHIP: IN FOCUS



Pet ownership - the law

Many pet owners in the UK are still not aware of what they need to provide for their pets to ensure their physical and mental wellbeing. Worryingly, the number of owners who are familiar with the laws surrounding pet ownership, continues to drop.

The Animal Welfare Acts place a duty of care onto owners to meet **five key welfare needs**. Yet the number of pet owners who are familiar with the Act has **DECREASED FROM 38% TO 36%** since the last Report.

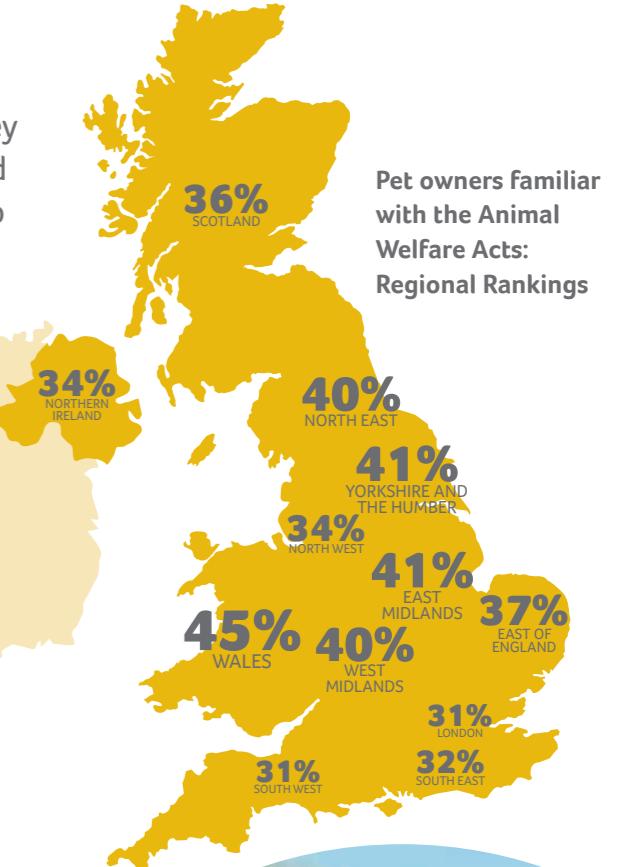
89% of pet owners believe that all pet owners should have a basic understanding of the five welfare needs.

97% of veterinary professionals believe there is value in encouraging owners to understand the five welfare needs contained within the Animal Welfare Acts.

A lack of education and awareness of the basic health and welfare needs of pets, means that many owners can be misguided with their affection towards their companion animals. The five welfare needs provide a really simple framework for owners. By finding out more about what their pets need, owners can make a huge change to their pets' lives.

ACT NOW

More than 1.5 million dogs don't wear a collar and tag and 30% of dog owners are unaware that this is a legal requirement. The Control of Dogs Order 1992 says that any dog in a public place must wear a collar and tag with the name and address of the owner on it. There is a potential **fine of up to £5,000** so if you are a dog owner – buy a collar and tag today!





PET OWNERSHIP: IN FOCUS

Choosing the right pet

Choosing the right pet according to a person's lifestyle is crucial, as is considering lifetime costs of pets – yet many owners have no idea how much their chosen pet will cost them over a lifetime.



What research was carried out before getting a pet?

Dog Owners	Cat Owners	Rabbit Owners
38% Have previous experience of the breed/animal	43% Have previous experience of the breed/animal	40% Have previous experience of the breed/animal
37% Looked on the internet	27% Nothing, I didn't do anything	25% Looked on the internet
19% Took advice from friends/family	17% Looked on the internet	13% Took advice from breeder

Research is vital before taking on a pet yet **nearly 5 million pet owners did no research at all** before taking on a pet.

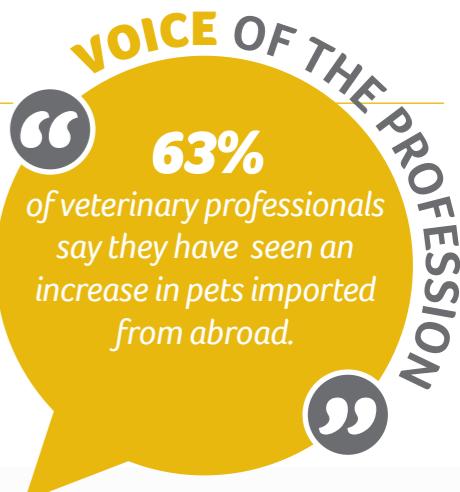
Where did your pet come from?

Dog Owners	Cat Owners	Rabbit Owners
24% Rescue/rehoming centre	35% Rescue/rehoming centre	39% Pet Shop
22% Breeder found through advert	29% Family or friend	21% Family or friend
16% Family or friend	7% Stray	15% Rescue/rehoming centre

PDSA recommends getting pets from reputable breeders or rescue centres, yet **25%** of pet owners would consider getting a puppy from a puppy farm and **24%** would consider getting a pet from the internet before visiting the pet.

Views on choosing a pet

	Vets and Vet Nurses	Pet Owners
Anyone breeding puppies should be licensed and regulated	98%	92%
Prospective owners should pass a test before taking on a pet	70%	44%
Online sales of pets should be regulated	92%	86%



Views on ownership

	Vets and Vet Nurses	Pet Owners
The UK is a nation of animal lovers	86%	92%
The UK pet owning public's knowledge regarding how to care for their pets has increased in the last five years	46%	35%



PET OWNERSHIP: IN FOCUS

Ownership costs

Our research has highlighted the lack of awareness when it comes to the cost of pet ownership. Many owners still vastly underestimate the lifetime costs of pet ownership with ¼ of dog owners and ⅓ of cat owners believing their pets will cost no more than £1,000 over their entire lifetime.



Actual likely lifetime cost **£16-31k**
Size of dog affects cost

93% ESTIMATED INCORRECTLY



Actual likely lifetime cost **£17k**

96% ESTIMATED INCORRECTLY



Actual likely lifetime cost **£9k**
Per rabbit*

97% ESTIMATED INCORRECTLY

The likely costs are based on estimates calculated by PDSA using current market prices and include: initial costs of the purchase of pet(s); neutering; first vaccinations; microchipping and accessories as well as the ongoing costs of food; boosters; pet insurance; toys; grooming; worming; flea treatments and cat litter in the case of cats. They do not include veterinary costs if a pet becomes sick or injured, so these average lifetime costs could be even higher.

*This is the actual likely lifetime cost for 1 rabbit – we recommend keeping rabbits in neutered pairs as they are social animals, so this should be taken into account when budgeting for the lifetime costs of rehoming rabbits.



VOICE OF THE PROFESSION

Veterinary professionals have identified the top 3 issues to be addressed relating to pet care and ownership in general:

1st

UNDERSTANDING
OF THE COST
OF OWNING A PET

2nd

AWARENESS OF THE
12345
WELFARE NEEDS

3rd

PRE-PURCHASE EDUCATION
REGARDING SUITABLE
PET CHOICE

47%

31%

29%



*The veterinary profession
also felt that **lack of
owner awareness of the
five welfare needs** is likely
to have the biggest health
and welfare implication
for pets in ten years' time.*

VOICE OF THE PROFESSION



Veterinary professionals continue to be the main source of pet care advice, with 70% of pet owners using vets for information. The public's opinion of the veterinary profession is also good, with pet owners stating they view them as **experts in pet care, a trusted source of knowledge and vital for keeping pets healthy and happy.**

Broken down further, the top 3 concerns per species were:

1st (JOINT)

**COST OF
KEEPING A DOG
+
OBESITY**

2nd Poor choice of breed for owner lifestyle

3rd Inadequate socialisation

1st

**LACK OF
NEUTERING
CATS**

2nd Multi-cat households

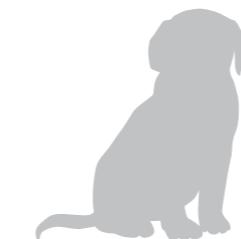
3rd Chronic stress among cats

1st

**INAPPROPRIATE
DIET
OF RABBITS**

2nd Complete lack of care – rabbits being forgotten about

3rd Dental disease



A BETTER LIFE FOR PETS

What PDSA has done since the first Report in 2011



EDUCATE THE PET OWNERS OF TOMORROW

- As part of the Animal Welfare Education Alliance, we continue to drive the proposal to get the five welfare needs onto the National Curriculum.

PET WISE MOTs

- Introduced 'Pet Wise MOTs' in our Pet Hospitals and on our PetCheck tours based on the Five Welfare Needs.

OVER 1.2 MILLION PREVENTATIVE TREATMENTS

- Delivered over 1.2 million preventative treatments through our Pet Hospital network.

PET WELLBEING TASK FORCE

- Developed a Pet Wellbeing Task Force to drive all aspects of pet wellbeing in all of the work that we do.

COLLABORATION TO EFFECT CHANGE

- Worked collaboratively with other animal welfare organisations and the media to use education to effect change.

PET WELLBEING IN THE MEDIA

- Raised awareness with millions of pet owners through PR campaigns and social media.

COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION TEAM

- Set up a Community and Education Veterinary Nursing team to work in local communities offering free health checks, talks and school workshops, allowing us to engage with more than 5,000 pet owners and 50,000 children every year. We provide advice, guidance and information on all aspects of pet wellbeing to help people better understand their responsibilities to their pets.



A BETTER LIFE FOR PETS

**Is your opinion making a difference?
YES! Thanks to your voice and ours:**

Compulsory Microchipping

- 83% of the pet owners and 95% of vets and vet nurses we surveyed in 2013 believed that microchipping should be compulsory for all dogs; a rise from 79% of pet owners in 2011. New legislation means that all dogs in Wales now have to be microchipped by March 2015, and all dogs in England by April 2016. It is already a legal requirement in Northern Ireland, and is still under consultation in Scotland.

**BY MARCH 2015
ALL DOGS IN WALES + ALL DOGS IN ENGLAND
HAVE TO BE MICROCHIPPED**



81% + 82%
OF PET OWNERS
OF VETS AND VET NURSES

BELIEVE THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD TAKE THE ISSUE OF
**DANGEROUS DOGS
MORE SERIOUSLY**

- 81% of pet owners and 82% of vets and vet nurses believe the government should take the issue of dangerous dogs more seriously. The amended Dangerous Dogs Act came into effect in England and Wales in May 2014. Under Section 3 of the Act, it is a criminal offence for a person in charge of a dog to allow it to be 'dangerously out-of-control' in a public place. A dog doesn't have to bite to be deemed dangerous in the eyes of the law. The Act also now covers incidents on private property – this includes a person's own house, front and back garden.

Changes to Dangerous Dogs Laws

- 85% of pet owners and 87% of vets and vet nurses believed that owners should face tougher penalties if their dog attacks another person or animal. The amended Dangerous Dogs Act, in addition to the above, means:
 1. It is an offence for your dog to attack an assistance dog (for example, a Guide Dog)
 2. Prison sentences will be increased for those owners convicted of some offences
 3. Police or an appointed local authority now have powers to seize a dangerously out-of-control dog on a private property



What can you do to help?

- Take part in the UK's biggest ever online pet survey and help us make a better life for pets.
- Your views will help shape our pet health and welfare work at PDSA and ensure our education programmes and campaigns focus on the biggest issues facing pets in the UK today to help make the biggest difference possible. As a thank you, we have some great prizes to give away!
- Please visit pdsa.org.uk/bigpetsurvey to take part today.

ISSUES IN FOCUS

Thank you to everyone who is already working alongside us to improve pet wellbeing. We can't do it alone.

References

When referring to the Animal Welfare Act this includes the Animal Welfare Acts covering England and Wales, the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 which applies to the whole of Scotland, and the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

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