



Pets change lives
We change theirs

The difference your support made

The year in review

2018



Who we are

Blue Cross is a charity that has been helping sick, injured, abandoned and homeless pets since 1897. Pets help us in so many ways and they depend entirely on us. That's why we believe in helping pets.

We help thousands of pets every month and with your support we will continue giving back to more pets in need.

Rehoming

We find new homes for homeless and abandoned cats, dogs, horses and small animals

Veterinary

We care for sick and injured pets when their owners can't afford private treatment

Behaviour

We help pets with behavioural issues to have happy, healthy futures

Education

We educate pet owners of the future by giving talks and offering advice

Pet bereavement support

We support people struggling to cope with the loss of a much loved pet

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Introduction

I'm honoured to be introducing your review of 2018, a year when your support made a huge difference to pets in need.

As you'll see, we've had a fantastic 12 months. Our Rehoming and Veterinary Services helped more pets than in the previous year, and our Pet Bereavement Support Service saw a huge 57 per cent increase in calls and emails from owners.

I hope you feel as proud of what you've helped us achieve as I am. It's true when I say that Blue Cross wouldn't be able to help so many sick, injured and homeless pets without the generosity and dedication of pet lovers like you.



Rehoming

Finding more pets the loving home they deserve

We're delighted that our Rehoming Team were able to help 9,253 homeless and abandoned pets in 2018 – that's 3.4 per cent more than 2017. In addition to the team's tireless work, this increase was helped by our new rehoming and advice unit in Sheffield and expanding our National Rehoming Network.

9,253
pets rehomed in
2018

Angel's delight

Angel the guinea pig was found in a zipped up sports bag in an empty house. The tenants had been evicted four weeks earlier, so we don't know how little Angel had survived.

When she came to our Suffolk centre, Angel was underweight, dehydrated and had a sore foot from sitting in her own urine. Even after all she'd been through, Angel was very sweet and loved a fuss. Thanks to your support we were able to nurse her back to health and find her the loving home she deserves.

Veterinary

Vet care in times of need

At times of hardship, owners often cannot afford private vet fees. That's where our veterinary teams step in to help.

Across our four animal hospitals and network of clinics we got an amazing 31,321 pets back on their paws in 2018.

We also expanded affordable vet care into new areas of the country, partnering with 84 private vet practices to help struggling pet owners through our Emergency Care Fund. And we opened four new pet care clinics, helping the owners of 4,169 pets keep their companions by their side.

Lifesaving care

Poor Sweet Pea needed urgent surgery after being hit by a car, leaving her with a ruptured diaphragm and struggling to breathe. She was rushed to our Victoria animal hospital in central London where, thanks to your support, we were able to give her the lifesaving operation she desperately needed. As Sweet Pea recovered her playful nature shone through, and without any way of tracing her owner she went to our Suffolk centre where we found her a loving new home.



In
2018
we treated
12 per cent more
pets than in
2017

Behaviour

Building relationships that last

Having missed out on basic training and socialisation, many pets who come to our centres need behavioural support before they can find a new home.

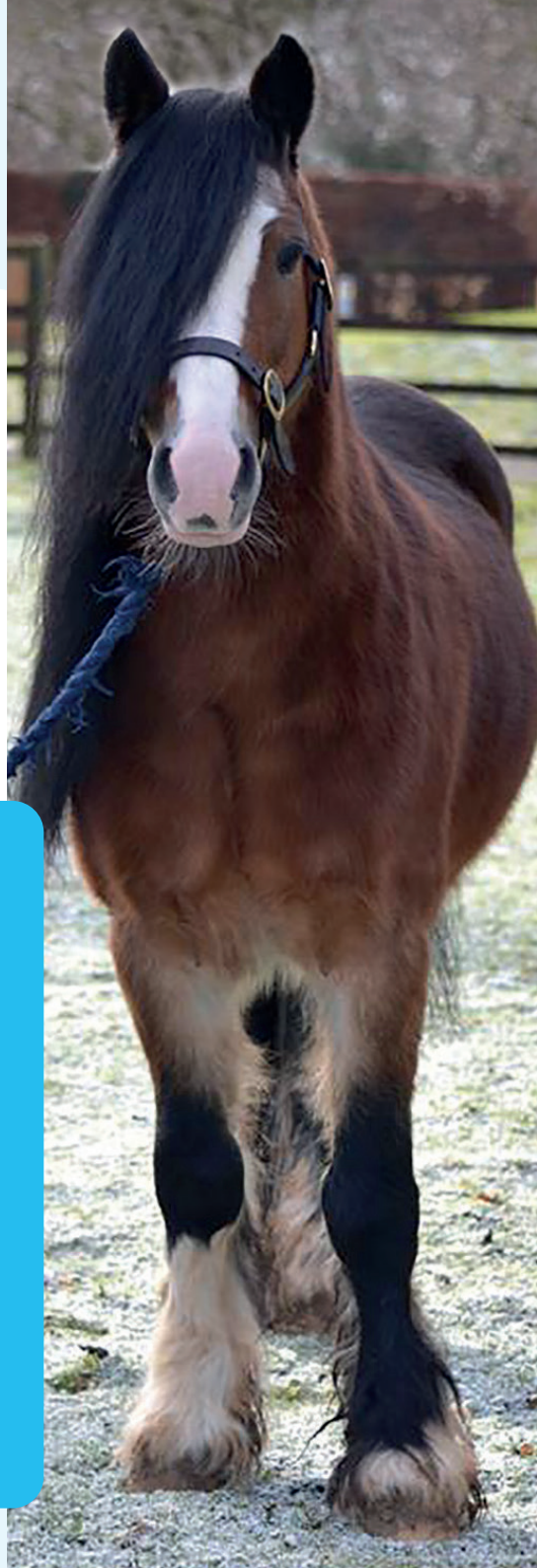
Last year 1,792 behaviour consultations helped pets get ready for a happy, contented life with their new owners. And thanks to your support we offer lifelong behavioural support to all pets rehomed from us.

1,792
consultations
in
2018

Learning to trust

Stew was rescued from appalling conditions – he'd been left for 19 months in a filthy stable with little food or water. Not surprisingly, Stew was mentally traumatised as well as being starving.

When he came to our Burford centre Stew could be aggressive around food, often charging at his groom. Once he realised that he didn't have to fight for food, he started to calm down. Soon, his groom could touch him and over three months worked to rebuild his trust in people. After his horrible past, it's a remarkable turnaround.



Education


Promoting responsible pet ownership

In 2018 our Education Team increased the number of young people reached through talks and workshops by a fantastic 18 per cent. In total, our dedicated team of employees and volunteers spoke to 112,660 future pet owners about safety around dogs, the various needs of different pets and much more.

Following extensive research, we also developed our new Life Skills workshop. Using video clips and quizzes, the exercises that make up the workshop focus on the legal and moral obligations of owning a dog.

With your support we will continue to educate young people and have a positive impact on the future of our nation's pets.

Reached
17,038
more young
people than in
2018



School's never dull when there's a 14-and-a-half stone St Bernard about! Billy Boo visits schools with volunteer Julia Hamilton, helping children understand how and when they can approach dogs.

Our highlights

40,574
pets helped
by Blue Cross



112,660
people reached
through education



352
pets helped by the
Emergency Care Fund



12,966

calls and emails answered
by our Pet Bereavement
Support Service,

4,736 more than 2017



1,399
Horse Welfare
Team visits



1,792

behaviour consultations to help pets in their new homes



2,209

Petwise MOTs



1,979

pets fostered

26

Welsh Assembly Members spoken with about our *Welsh Pets Deserve Better* online sales report

67

MSPs met with to discuss our *Scottish Pets Deserve Better* online sales report



Pet Bereavement Support Service

Supporting people struggling with the loss of a much loved pet

Pets are such an important part of our families that saying goodbye never becomes any easier. This year we saw a 57 per cent increase in the number of calls and emails to our Pet Bereavement Support Service (PBSS).

Proving that grief knows no boundary, a number of these emails came from grieving owners outside of the UK, including America, Canada, India and Spain.

We also saw a huge increase in volunteer applications (207%) and people undergoing the intensive training to become PBSS volunteers. It takes something very special and committed to serve as this type of volunteer and we are always keen to hear from anybody who feels they have the compassion and dedication to help others at their time of need.

We have also developed a number of accredited, award-winning training courses. These have helped hundreds of vets and vet practices across the UK gain the crucial skills they need to support owners when dealing with pet loss and grief within their practices.

In 2019 we will celebrate the 25th anniversary of PBSS, the first support service of its kind.

12,966
calls and
emails
answered

"I was so pleased to discover your service for my daughter. After losing her guinea pig, she was distraught as it was her first pet, and the support, understanding and advice given to her really helped her not feel alone in her grief."

"The Blue Cross PBSS course was brilliant. It has enabled me to feel more supported in having the skills in helping our owners when they need it most."

Anne, Practice Manager



Influencing policy

Fighting for pets and their owners

We spent a large part of 2018 campaigning for repeal of section one of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991. Currently, dogs are euthanised based on their looks rather than behaviour, unfairly penalising well-behaved dogs and also failing to protect the public from irresponsible dog owners.

More than 80,000 pet lovers like you agreed, signing the petition we launched as part of our campaign to end breed specific legislation. Our Public Affairs Team delivered it to 10 Downing Street in February 2019, and also gave evidence highlighting issues with the current legislation to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee.

Duncan deserved a second chance

Duncan was handed into Blue Cross as a stray. Unfortunately, Duncan resembled a type of dog banned under section one of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991. Stray section one dogs cannot be rehomed by law and must be euthanised. Duncan had a wonderful temperament, was eager to learn commands, and was well-behaved. We believe he would have made a loving pet had he been given the chance to live.

80,000
signatures
to our
petition



Legacies

An enduring legacy of love

There is no more special way to allow a love of pets to live on than with a gift left in a Will. These incredibly personal and inspiring gifts fund half of all our work.

We continue to be humbled that so many supporters choose to remember us in this special way.

A very special gift

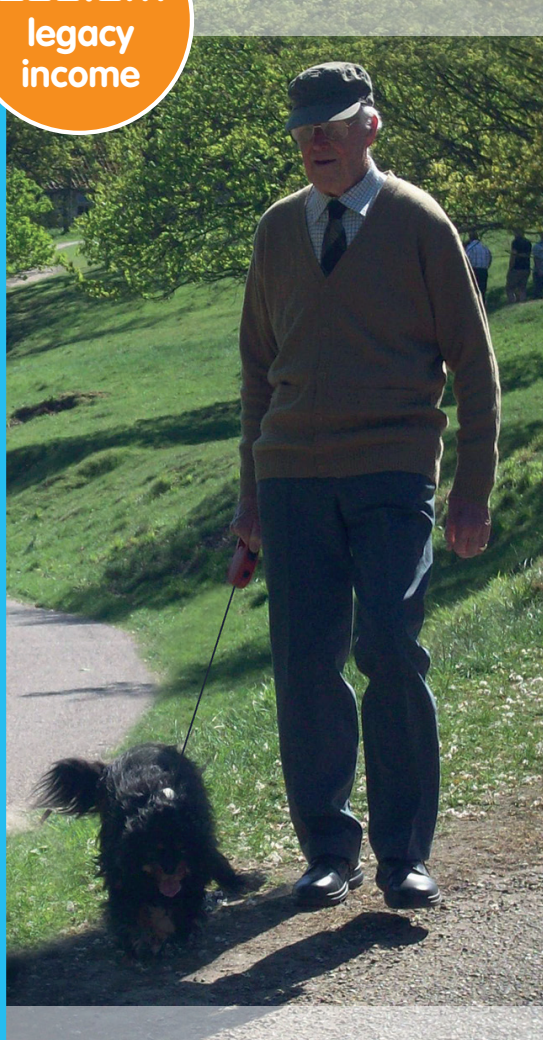
Maurice Fox, whose life was transformed by a Blue Cross rescue dog after his wife passed away, will help many more pets in need through a generous gift of £33,500 left in his Will.

Mr and Mrs Fox owned many dogs throughout their marriage. The last pet the couple shared was a cavalier King Charles spaniel called Griannie, who sadly passed away soon after Mrs Fox, leaving her husband completely lost.

Their daughter, Margaret Easton, said: "Luckily, the family persuaded him that, still being fit and well, another dog would be a very good idea." And so, in 2007, Mr Fox adopted Susie, a black and tan cavalier, from Blue Cross Thirsk. After a tough start to life Susie landed on her paws with Mr Fox, and the pair shared an "amazing" eight years together.

Blue Cross is ever so grateful that we were able to bring Susie and Mr Fox together for their final years, and for this very generous gift.

£22.2m
legacy
income



Volunteers

Our terrific team of 4,327 volunteers gave an amazing 454,743 hours of their time to help pets in need. That's almost a third of all hours worked at Blue Cross!

Volunteers help us in all areas of our work, from rehoming and veterinary to education and PBSS. As a charity we couldn't help so many pets without their hard work and dedication. We're incredibly grateful for their time and dedication, and would like to say a huge thank you to each and every volunteer.

4,327
volunteers
454,743
hours
dedicated



Amy Mowforth

Nominated for Ambassador of the Year and Room to Reward scheme



Ben Atkin

Ambassador of the Year and volunteer



Peta Stevens

Nominated for Ambassador of the Year and Room to Reward scheme



Pete Daniel

Volunteer of the Year

Our plans for the future

We're committed to finding new, more agile and efficient ways to work so that we can help as many pets and owners as possible. Here's what's in the pipeline to make sure your donations go as far as possible.

- Updating our dog safety workshop in line with the latest research
- Commencing the planned refurbishment of our Hertfordshire rehoming centre
- Working with more private veterinary practices to make our Emergency Care Fund available to pet owners in more areas
- Expanding our Rehoming Services in the north of England by opening a cost effective rehoming and advice unit in Merseyside (see opposite for more about the unit recently opened in Manchester)
- Conducting research and publishing a report into the positive effects of pet ownership on mental health, poverty and loneliness
- Continuing to develop partnerships with other charities and organisations to help more pets in an efficient manner
- Trialling a discounted online vet service for Blue Cross customers, helping struggling pet owners who don't live near one of our hospitals or clinics to access vet advice
- Celebrating 25 years of the Pet Bereavement Support Service helping owners to cope with pet loss

Helping pets rebuild their future

After more than 70 years of caring for pets, our Hertfordshire rehoming centre is no longer up to the high welfare standards we pride ourselves on. With cramped pens and kennels that overlook each other and few outdoor runs, cats and dogs often find life at the centre a less than ideal place to start rebuilding their lives.

We are therefore delighted to be rebuilding the centre this summer. New, spacious accommodation will give the pets in our care as much privacy as possible. A better layout will free up the team at the centre to spend more time working on behavioural issues, helping to get pets ready for rehoming. The rebuild will also give pets access to outdoor areas attached to their runs, meaning they can get some fresh air whenever they wish.

We would like to thank each and every supporter who donated to our appeal to make the rebuild possible.

We don't receive any government funding, so we are grateful for your vital support.



Aerial view of the planned Hertfordshire rehoming centre refurbishment



Finding new ways to rehome pets

Our new rehoming and advice unit in Manchester is a great example of our new, agile way of finding pets new homes.

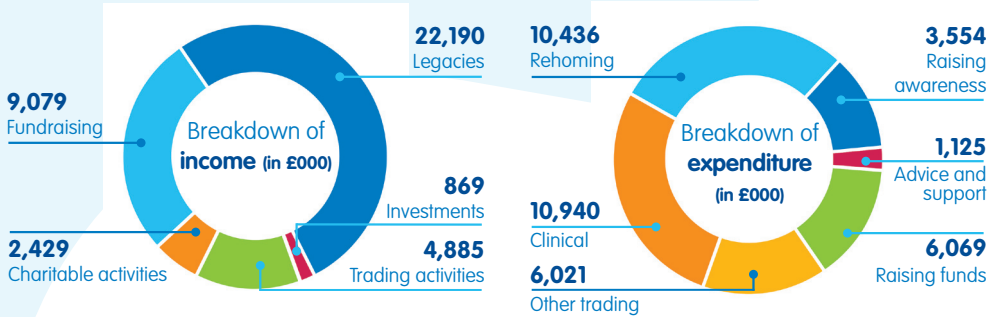
Premises that are far smaller than traditional rehoming centres keep overheads down, while being in areas of high footfall and opposite one of our shops raises awareness of our work and encourages passersby to pop in. Dogs spend their days in home rooms where they can meet potential new owners, and stay in a local kennels at night.

Six months after opening the unit has found homes for more than 150 pets.

We plan to expand this way of working by opening a new unit in Merseyside.

Breakdown of income/expenditure

All amounts are in £'000



Read our full annual report and financial statements at bluecross.org.uk/publications

Thank you

To each and every person who has helped us change pets' lives, thank you.

We don't receive any government funding, so we are grateful for your vital support.

If you would like further information about our work, please call our Supporter Care Team on:

0300 790 9903

or visit:

bluecross.org.uk

