

FOR PETS

The magazine for Blue Cross supporters

SPRING 2018

WONDERFUL THING

STRAY STAFFIE FINDS
A BEST FRIEND

PLUS

Cat Libby makes a house a home

Super Mario to the rescue

And it's time for tea!



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Welcome

Spring is finally here! After what feels like such a long and cold winter, I don't know about you but I'm looking forward to making the most of the longer, lighter evenings and enjoying the great outdoors with my dog. This issue, you'll meet some very special pets who have inspired their owners to get out and about. Our cover star is Tigger, who is helping owner Sarah train for the London Marathon and raise funds for Blue Cross. And on page 24 you'll meet Mario, a horse who has helped owner Fiona get back in the saddle after a terrible accident. Plus, find out how in 2018, your support is helping us help many more sick and injured pets around the UK. Oh – and don't forget to put the kettle on for Paws for Tea! Why not make it a garden party? Happy reading!

Rachael Millar, Editor



COVER STORY

4 Wonderful Tigger

From lonely stray to much-loved motivator

EDITORIAL

EDITORS

Aimee Brannen
Rachael Millar

PHOTO LIBRARY

Tracey Cooper

DESIGN

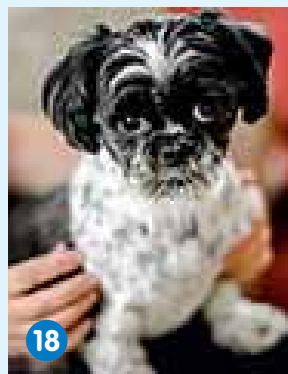
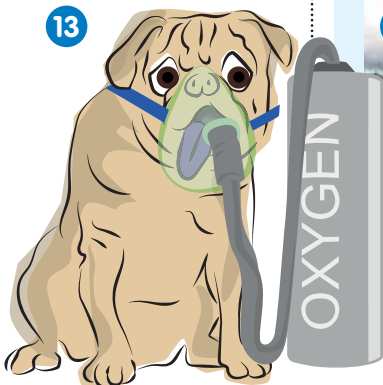
Petersen Creative
Andrea Fraser

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Steve Bardens
Martin Phelps
Helen Yates

ILLUSTRATION

Rachel Greatorex Jones



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THE WONDERFUL THING ABOUT
TIGGER





Not only did Sarah take a chance on an unwanted staffie, now she's taking on tough challenges to give back to the charity that gave her Tigger...

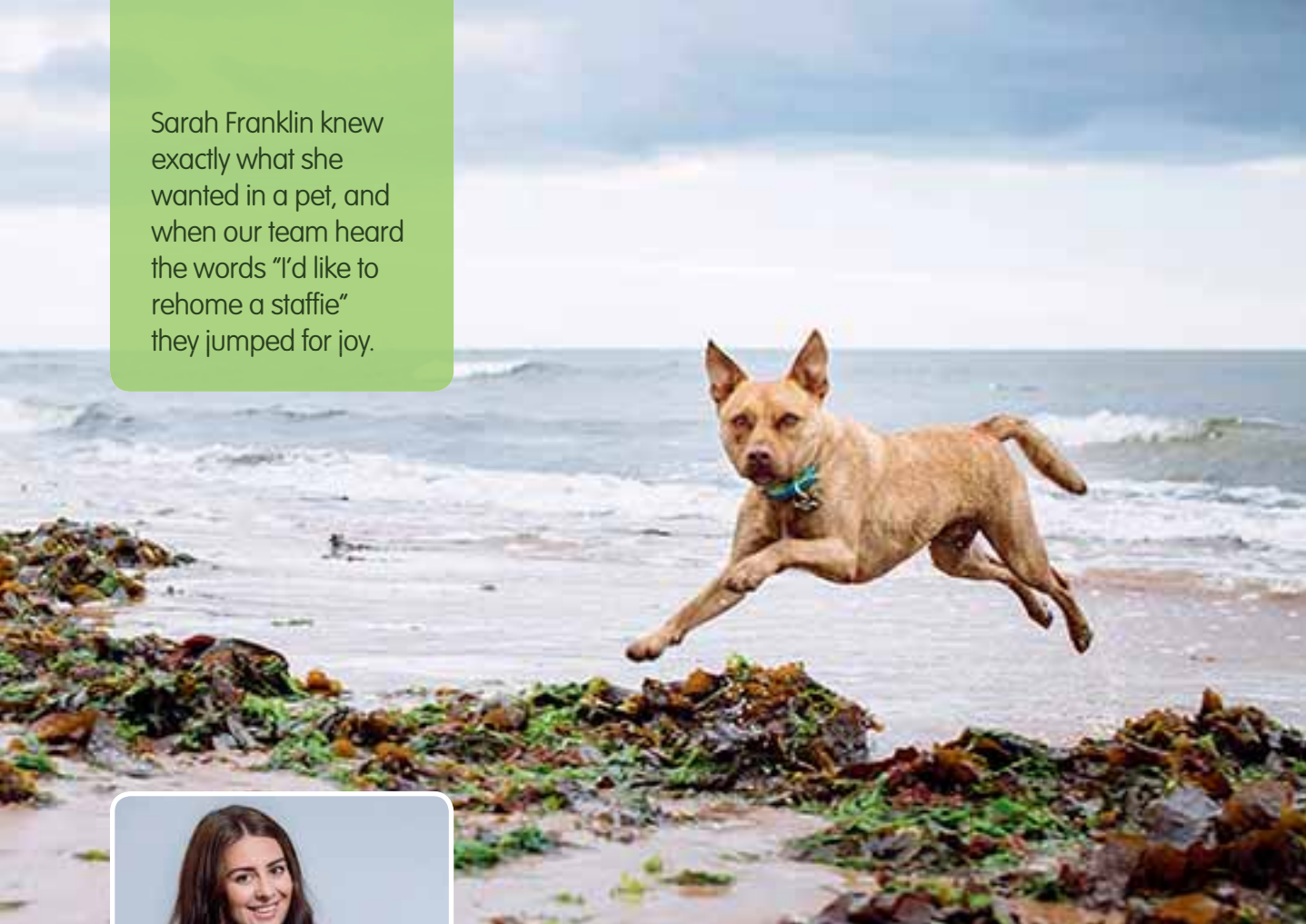
It must have been very lonely in the stray kennels, particularly for a dog as worried about the world as Tigger was. He couldn't have been further away from the bouncy and self-assured animal of his namesake from the classic AA Milne children's tales.

Tigger waited with the dog warden for a week for his owner to claim him, but day after day his wait proved hopeless and no one stepped forward to take him home. At this point the local authority could have put him to sleep, but luckily for Tigger, the team at our Tiverton rehoming centre gave him a second shot at happiness.

Kerry Hall, Animal Welfare Assistant, remembers the worried soul arrive: "He was very shy and was obviously very worried of us at first, which is really sad to see in a dog. He spent a lot of time with his tail tucked between his legs."



Sarah Franklin knew exactly what she wanted in a pet, and when our team heard the words "I'd like to rehome a staffie" they jumped for joy.



Tigger was not in the best condition either and was underweight; signs that he hadn't been treated well by whoever had abandoned him.

Kerry explained: "By giving Tigger lots of food and gently introducing him to playing with toys and balls we were able to help him understand that people weren't something to be fearful of."

Tigger's confidence grew and he soon found his bounce.

Sarah Franklin knew exactly what she wanted in a pet, and when our team heard the words "I'd like to rehome a staffie" they jumped for joy. Blue Cross takes in over 400 unwanted and abandoned staffies every year.

Because of the much-maligned breed's unfair reputation, they take an awful lot longer to rehome than dogs that don't come with a stigma attached. And what makes their long length of stay even tougher is that bull breeds tend to hate kennel life because being around and snuggling up to people is all they really want to do – a need which, as hard as we try, is difficult to meet in a kennel environment like an owner can at home.

Sarah, who rehomed Tigger in March 2016, was on the lookout for a faithful hound to join her in her adventures exploring the great British outdoors. She explains: "I wanted to offer a dog that hadn't necessarily had the greatest start, a good life.

"We do all sorts together. We go hiking, he comes out running with me, we do agility together – which Tigger is miles better at than I am – he comes paddleboarding, we've been sailing and canoeing; pretty much everything!"

Sarah encouraged Tigger to become comfortable with the paddleboard by placing it in her kitchen and giving him a treat every time he interacted with it.



She explains: "It led to him eventually voluntarily jumping on to it and he'd get loads of treats. I think he thought it was another bed, and he'd sleep on it! At that point I knew he was very happy with it so then we took it out to the water. I just took it really slow with him, starting on some very calm water. But I didn't need to worry too much as he just jumped on and was absolutely fine!"

Tigger sits on the front of Sarah's board and, when the water is calm, he lies down and has a snooze. He wears a doggy lifejacket in case he should fall in and his swimming skills fail. Spending time with a gentle, patient and dedicated owner has done the world of good for nervous Tigger, and Sarah can see the hard work paying off.

To say thank you to Blue Cross for finding her perfect pet and

paddleboarding companion, Sarah agreed to undertake two gruelling challenges in just 10 months to raise funds and help even more pets who are in need of loving homes.

In October she climbed to Everest base camp, which at 17,600ft is no small feat for anyone, let alone for someone who lives at sea level. Tigger dutifully took on the role of training buddy and scaled hills and mountains in the UK with Sarah in preparation. He is also enjoying accompanying Sarah on her training runs for her second challenge, the London Marathon, this April.

We'd like to say a huge thank you to Sarah, not only for her great efforts to raise funds for sick and homeless pets, but also for taking a chance on a sad stray staffie and giving him the home he thought he could only dream of. 🍀

Helping fearful dogs

Dogs become scared of things, more often than not, because of a lack of socialisation. Between five and 12 weeks puppies have a key socialisation period, and if they don't have good experiences with something or someone in this time, they can become fearful of it later in life.

We're always here to help owners with pets they have rehomed from us – for life – and we're working with Sarah to continue to build Tigger's confidence.

A woman with long, wavy brown hair is sitting on a light-colored sofa. She is wearing a white off-the-shoulder top and black jeans with a tear. She is smiling and holding the paw of a brown dog that is sitting on the sofa next to her. The dog is wearing a blue collar. The background is a simple room with a light blue wall and a potted plant.

“I wanted to offer a dog that hadn’t necessarily had the greatest start, a good life.”



Libby the care home cat

The abandoned puss has found her perfect calling, bringing comfort and joy to the elderly people she now lives alongside...



Pets can make a house a home, and that's certainly the case for a very special Blue Cross cat living alongside elderly people in a residential care scheme.

Libby was rehomed by our Hertfordshire centre to Fosse House in St Albans and spends her days spreading joy to those that live there, contently weaving her way in and out of rooms and snuggling up beside them in the lounge.

It has proved to be the perfect calling for the abandoned puss, who sadly arrived at Blue Cross in the back of a taxi, all alone and with no details about her past to help us understand her needs.

We soon discovered that she was pregnant and she gave birth weeks later. But while her kittens flew the nest to forever homes, poor Libby was left waiting for her second shot at happiness.

That was until the centre in Kimpton was contacted by Fosse House Manager, Zoë Hiscox. She had recently taken on the role and was adamant that the presence

of a four-legged friend would bring huge comfort to the residents.

We agreed and just knew that Libby, who was in our care for nearly four months, would be the ideal candidate.

"We thought she'd be perfect because she was so lovely and relaxed," said Rehoming Supervisor, Kirsten Findlay. "She's interactive but calming and affectionate, without being too demanding. She wasn't in your face, and we thought that she would be the type of cat that would just sit alongside people."

It was music to Zoë's ears and within days Libby embarked on her new life as a therapy cat.

"She settled in straight away," said Zoë. "Within an hour you would have thought she had always been here. It's her attitude; she's bolshie and not afraid, but affectionate at the same time. Nothing fazes her."

Fosse House has 81 residents and is part of not-for-profit organisation, Quantum Care, which strongly believes in the importance of pets in people's lives and is open to animals living in its homes.



It's an approach that Blue Cross strongly advocates as the benefits to residents are huge; the mere presence of a pet can help relieve stress and when people stroke them it can increase endorphins, making them happier.

"Libby being here makes it more like a home. She's not all over everyone's laps, but when the residents are sitting watching tele she'll be sitting in the chair next to them. It's comforting and more homely for them.

"Many of the residents here have got high levels of dementia but for those that don't remember her it doesn't matter, because in the moment it gives them that good feeling. If they can't walk or talk, it's something for them to look at and engage with. And it can bring back to them fond memories of when they've had pets.

"Libby has also been known to comfort some of our really sick residents in their final days. It's like she just knew. But she's very intuitive,

so if somebody isn't keen on cats she will sense that and will stay away."

One of the many residents whose days are lit up by Libby is Derek Parkes, who was heartbroken to leave behind a cat of his own when he started to need round-the-clock care for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

He said: "She waits in my chair every morning for me when I come in for breakfast and she has started sleeping in my room on my bed, and I open my window just enough to let her in from outside as I hear her meow.

"It's nice having her around. I had a cat before I was here who I really miss and it reminds me of her."

Zoë added: "I didn't even realise until now that Libby had been going into Derek's room. There's so much that she does for people that brings so many benefits that we don't even know about, as this proves. If only she could talk!"

Libby's presence has also had an impact in areas that Zoë, who has gone on to rehome four chipmunks and two rabbits for the residents to interact with, hadn't even anticipated.

"There has been a massive knock on effect in that Libby and the other animals encourage younger visitors," she said. "Care homes to children can be really scary places, but now we've got a few families with little ones who really want to go and see grandma because of the pets, and turn up with treats for Libby.

"Children are excited to visit and see the animals so the families see more of their relatives, and the elderly love to be around kids. It's all just so positive; we wouldn't be without Libby now and would love more pets."

Kirsten added: "It's really lovely to hear how much happiness Libby brings to so many people and we're glad that we could give her a second chance to do that. It's brilliant to be able to match a pet to a home so perfectly." 🐾



SOME FACTS ABOUT BREEDS CATEGORISED AS

Brachycephalic

[BRAK-EE-SUH-FAL-IK]

Definition: Adj. / Anatomy. Having a relatively broad, short skull (typically with the breadth at least 80 per cent of the length).

Flat-faced, or 'brachycephalic', pets are increasingly appearing on newspaper splashes and headlines – but why? It's largely to do with a reaction from the veterinary profession and animal welfare world to the soaring popularity of extremely fashionable breeds such as French bulldogs and pugs. Flat-faced cats, such as Persians, and even Lionhead rabbits, are en vogue now, too.

At Blue Cross, we're concerned. These breeds tend to appeal to animal lovers because they look similar to human babies with their big 'puppy dog' eyes and they can make fun companions, so it's no surprise that people want to add them to their families. But they do tend to suffer more from certain health problems than those breeds with longer snouts.

Brachycephalic breeds are at risk of breathing-related problems precisely because their head shape has changed so much from the healthier long-nosed muzzle shape that is a normal characteristic of

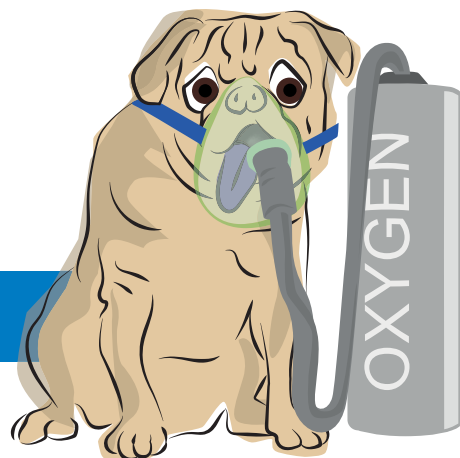
the canine species. Snorting and snoring aren't just a cute sound; they are signs that these dogs are struggling to breathe due to an airway blockage. Without selectively breeding for a healthier skull conformation, these inherited problems cannot be prevented.

“58% of owners do not recognise the signs that their flat-faced dog is struggling to breathe*”

Dental disease, gastrointestinal problems, skin infections and eye problems are also common. Brachycephalic dog breeds are more likely to succumb to heatstroke due to their reduced ability to lose heat by panting, something some owners of such breeds are unaware of. Studies have suggested that 86 per cent of English bulldog puppies, and over 80 per cent of French bulldog puppies, are delivered by C-section in the UK, a major and risky operation for both mum and pups.

It is true that less exaggerated examples of flat-faced dog breeds suffer less than those with more extreme features, and not all brachycephalic dogs will need veterinary intervention during their lifetime. The problem for these breeds is that too many of them do need complex, high-risk and expensive surgery simply to be able to breathe normally and enjoy a happy life.

As these breeds grow in popularity, our animal hospital teams are treating more cases for a wide variety of problems caused by breeding for a characteristic flat-face. Sadly, their popularity is also fuelling a cruel and illegal trade. We'd advise anyone wanting one of these dogs to rehome from a reputable rescue organisation.




Read more about brachycephalic breeds on our website at bluecross.org.uk/brachycephalic

*Royal Veterinary College/Universities Federation for Animal Welfare, May 2012


How to make your garden a haven for pets

Summer's on its way, so seize the moment and make sure your pet can enjoy your garden as much as you do...



Keep small pet runs and hutches safe and secure from neighbourhood predators.

Lawn feed and moss killer may irritate your pet's paws and can cause gastrointestinal upsets.




Try to deter pets from chasing bees and wasps as stings can cause allergic reactions.


Keep shed doors firmly shut and greenhouse entrances/exits blocked with mesh to prevent explorers from becoming trapped or getting into trouble with dangerous substances or sharp tools kept inside, or succumbing to heatstroke.



Make your garden into a pet pleasure park. Put a scratching post or two outside for cats, and why not treat your dog to a sandpit so they can dig for treats? You could even provide tunnels for your bunnies.



Shaded areas provide great relief from the hot summer sun for all pets. Move rabbit and guinea pig hutches and runs to areas out of midday rays, and keep water supplies topped up.



Find peace of mind by making sure gates and fences are secure from whiskered Houdinis. Six foot is a good height to stop most jumpers, and chicken wire placed 12 inches below ground should foil any diggers' plans.

Looking for pet safe plants? Try parsley, sage and thyme for small furies, catmint and catnip for felines, and lavender, rosemary and snapdragons if you have a dog.

Avoid chemical weed killers and pesticides as they can be harmful to pets (and wildlife). Read patio cleaner manufacturer guidelines carefully.

Slugs and snails can be a pain but pellets are toxic to pets as well as pests. Stick to using barriers like soot, sharp sand or beer traps. Ask your vet about lungworm protection.

Choose plants carefully. Lilies are toxic to and can kill cats. Bulbs swallowed can cause gut blockages. Don't let rabbits chew on any plant grown from a bulb or feed them cut grass. Rhododendron is a common garden plant that can be toxic to pets.

Ask BBQ and party guests not to leave food, skewers or hot cooking implements within your pet's reach. Many human foods are best avoided by pets and alcohol is a definite no-no.



For more top tips and a comprehensive list of poisonous plants visit bluecross.org.uk/gardens



PAWS UP
if you're in!



Treat your pet to some delicacies this Paws for Tea – and treat sick, injured and homeless Blue Cross pets too by raising lots of funds.

This May, the tastiest fundraising event in the UK is back with a bang! Take a sprinkling of best friends and family, mix in some afternoon tea and cake, and the proof is in the pudding. You could even add a glass of bubbly and raise a toast to the Royal Wedding. Choose your favourite ingredients for an enjoyable day.

To get you started, follow our tried and tested recipe for dog-friendly pupcakes. And if that's whetted your tastebuds, why not order your free fundraising pack today for more bakes for pets and humans alike? Simply fill in the coupon at the back of *For Pets* or visit bluecross.org.uk/teaparty

Recipe

For the pupcakes

- 165g self-raising flour
- 165g finely grated carrot
- 2 eggs
- 60ml honey

To decorate

- 280g cream cheese
- Small dog treats

Method

1. Pre-heat your oven to 170°C (325°F)/Gas Mark 3, and spray a mini muffin tray with non-stick baking spray (or use paper cases)
2. Beat together all the pupcake ingredients until well mixed
3. Place a teaspoon of mixture into each muffin cup and once full, tap the tin a couple of times gently on the work surface to level out the mixture
4. Bake for 25 mins then leave to cool completely before removing from the tin
5. Whip the cream cheese until smooth then spread or pipe onto the cupcakes
6. Decorate with a tasty doggie treat if you like

Other tasty treat ideas for your pet can be downloaded at bluecross.org.uk/teaparty Please feed in moderation and with consideration to your dog's own diet and needs. Please also bear in mind that should you wish to personalise the recipe, raisins, chocolate and artificial sweeteners are toxic to dogs. Recipe only suitable for dogs.

*You can host your party at any time to suit you.



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This year's Paws
for Tea takes
place on Friday
11 May*



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Every pet deserves



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Any injury/illness which occurred before your pet's cover started is a pre-existing condition and will not be covered.



Neglected dog finds a HAPPY HOME

Now a much-loved pet, former stray shih tzu Rupert is unrecognisable from the terrified dog with a painfully knotted coat that was found roaming the streets...

When Rupert arrived in our care, his fur was so badly overgrown and matted that we couldn't even tell what gender or breed he was.

The poor boy had been found wandering the streets alone, confused and barely able to see through the filthy clumps of fur covering his little face. All the knots pulling tightly on his skin were causing pain too.

What a relief it must have been for the shih tzu when he was finally clipped and bathed. But he then had to spend a week all by himself in the council pound to see if anyone claimed him – nobody did.

And so Rupert, who is about 11 years old, returned to our Burford rehoming centre in Oxfordshire which set about finding him a home where he would always be safe.

Within days, David and Doreen Connop came across Rupert's profile on our website. They struck up an instant bond with him when they visited the centre, and soon took him home.

The couple had been feeling lost after the death of their elderly dog Herbie, also a shih tzu, and wanted another pet to help mend their broken hearts.

Rupert has done exactly that, and in return, the Connops have taught him what it means to be truly loved.

"He's our life," said Doreen. "We wouldn't part with him for anything, he's just gorgeous."

The couple, who are both in their 70s, were adamant that they wanted to rehome an older dog, a decision they say is filled with reward.

"We were absolutely devastated when Herbie died. We only rehomed him three years earlier but we just felt that we'd done such a nice thing having an old dog. For the time we had him he wanted for nothing," Doreen said.

"So we thought we'd do it again and that's how Rupert came along. I'd choose an old dog any day. For an older couple like us it means we're not committing ourselves to 15 years or more, and the fact that people don't want older dogs and they just sit in kennels with nobody to love them is just horrific."

Rupert took no time at all to settle into his new home in a Herefordshire retirement village, where he's not just a hit with his owners but also the other residents he meets and greets on his daily strolls.

He spends hours every day exploring the couple's flower-filled garden and running about with his favourite toy – a plastic orange bowl.

A fuss and cuddle on the sofa is another of his favourite pastimes and he has also become an avid television fan.

"He spent two weeks glued to the side of the television after watching a dog rescue programme – he thought the dogs were in there, he just couldn't work it out," laughed David.

At the weekends he joins Doreen and David on family visits and loves to play with their young grandchildren.

In fact, inquisitive Rupert has so much energy that the couple initially wondered if he might be younger than originally thought.

“He’s our life. We wouldn’t part with him for anything, he’s just gorgeous.”

Rupert before



“He is a very special little dog and we feel very lucky that he is ours.”



But his zest for life motivates Doreen and David, and together they're the perfect team.

“He’s like a puppy sometimes – he’s like lightning when he runs. I take him for a walk every morning. He definitely gets us out more which is important as I have to keep moving because of the problems I have with my leg. And as soon as I start putting my socks on he knows he’s getting a walk,” David said.

Doreen continued: “Although he’s happy on his own, he’s rarely left because we take him everywhere in the crate in the car. But if we do go out, and it’s never more than three hours, when we get back it’s worth going out just for the greeting. He starts jumping up and down like he’s on springs as he’s so happy to see us!”

“Whatever we do in life it’s got to be for him,” added David.

Rupert has truly landed on his paws, and even has his own money box which Doreen and David put cash into each week for treats like a heated dog bed for winter.

Laura Crofts, Small Animal Manager at our Burford centre, said: “Poor Rupert was in such a sorry state when he arrived with us. It was an appalling case of neglect, and we were worried that his little soul would be shattered.

“But as soon as he was groomed and cleaned up, and he realised that he was safe, we saw the bubbly, happy and affectionate dog he was. He just loves to be around people and he made us all smile here at the centre.

“We’re so pleased that he found such a wonderful home with Doreen and David. He really did deserve a happy ending and that’s exactly what he has found.”

GROOMING FACTS

All dogs, regardless of breed, need regular grooming. Dogs with long coats like Rupert also need clipping to keep their fur at a manageable length. Had this been done for him, it would have saved so much suffering. Rupert now enjoys regular trips to the groomers and his coat always looks in tip top condition thanks to his caring new owners. Read our advice on brushing your dog, choosing the right groomers and how to help your pet through a fear of grooming at bluecross.org.uk/pet-advice/grooming-your-dog

Doreen added: “It’s so upsetting to think about how much he must have suffered before coming to us, but that will never happen again. For the rest of his life he will only know love.

“He is a very special little dog and we feel very lucky that he is ours.” +



Read more of Rupert’s story online at bluecross.org.uk/story/rupert

COULD YOU TAKE ME HOME?

Can you give any of these Blue Cross pets a place in your heart and your home?

ZINNIA

Since being at Blue Cross, I've decided that I can put my trust in humans. In my past I was very nervous, but now I realise they just want to help me. I'm told I'm a very beautiful girl and would make a great companion.

Rolleston 0300 777 1520



COMET AND CUPID

We are a (neutered) husband and wife and we'd love to become part of a human family. Comet is inquisitive, loves exploring and getting into mischief. I'm Cupid, and my favourite game is running through my tunnel. Take us home?

Lewknor 0300 777 1500



MRS TOBY

I'm a little lonely and would love a (neutered) male companion to spend my days with. I might even share my vegetables with him! I love exploring and finding out about the world. I do enjoy a cuddle with people too.

Torbay 0300 777 1550

ICE

Hello! I'm Ice and I've been told I have a lovely singing voice. I love to keep active and I'm looking for a new owner who will join me on long walks and keep up my passion for agility. Can we spend lots of time together?

Herfordshire 0300 777 1490



LULU

Don't let my serious face put you off, I'm a real softy! People keep passing me by and I think that might be because I'm 13. I'd love a quiet retirement home where I can enjoy a good fuss. I'm very affectionate once we're friends.

Suffolk 0300 777 1480



MAUREN

Hello, I'm Maureen I am a young girl with a lovely laid back nature. I am very good to handle and will stand for hours being groomed and pampered. I'd make an excellent companion as I really like being around my fellow horses.

Burford 0300 777 1570

Hundreds of pets are just waiting to meet you

Find your new best friend at bluecross.org.uk/rehome

HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

In a crisis, our doors are always open – and now, we can help even more sick and injured pets as we open four new pet care clinics...



Our new clinics mean we can help 2,780 more pets next year.



It was a phone call no pet owner wants to receive. Caschella Teague answered to be told her beloved young cat Toothless was at the vet's having been found lying in a hedge after being hit by a car. His leg was broken and he was in a very bad way.

"We scanned Toothless for a microchip and contacted Caschella," says Eyal Opher, Veterinary Surgeon.

Caschella explains: "He had a problem with his kidney and I was facing him being put to sleep. I really don't know what I'd have done without Blue Cross."

We were there to help Toothless get back on his paws thanks to our Cwmbran pet care clinic in South Wales. The clinic is open to pets belonging to people in the local area who are unable to afford private fees.

Adele Morgan, Receptionist at Summerdale Veterinary Centre where our Cwmbran clinic is based, said: "People may have fallen on hard times, be facing illness or redundancy and may not be able to afford private fees, so the clinic means we can really help the local community here."



Because our clinics operate in partnership with private practices, we don't have to build brand new facilities which means more of our funds can go straight towards helping pets in need. Cwmbran has been up and running for a year, and we're excited to be opening four new clinics this spring, in Ashford (Kent), Luton, Torbay and York.

Anne and Mike White have been bringing their beloved Chinese crested powderpuff, Polo, to the Cwmbran clinic for help with his teeth.

Mike says: "We're pensioners now and we can't afford private prices. I love my dog. I've always said if you have a dog, you've got to look after them. You've got to look after them as best you can. If the new clinics are half as good as the vets here, we'd definitely recommend them."



Find out more at bluecross.org.uk/petcareclinic

SUPER MARIO

After a horrific accident left Fiona Bloomfield wondering if she'd ever get back in the saddle, one rescue cob proved to be just the right medicine...

Fiona Bloomfield was riding along a quiet bridlepath on Boxing Day morning with a good friend on a trusted horse, when suddenly shots rang out without warning. An unadvertised clay pigeon shoot spooked the horse and she was flung from the terrified animal on to the cold, hard December ground.

"My friend was great and knew exactly what to do," says Fiona. "I was airlifted out and they did say that had I not had my body protector on, I'd have been paralysed.

"Three millimetres was the difference between me walking and not walking. It definitely makes you look at things differently, and how quickly it can all go wrong."

Fiona spent the following six months in a full body brace as her broken spine slowly healed. And alongside her extremely supportive husband, children and friends, the drive to ride again helped push her through rehabilitation. She says:

"I just knew that if I didn't get back in the saddle, I didn't know who I was going to be."

Mario arrived in Blue Cross care in 2015. He was only a sweet young thing and we didn't know very much at all about his background so began his training from scratch.

For Fiona's family, a solid, stoic and safe pony was a necessity so they could rest assured she would be safe. Calm Mario was the perfect match.

Fiona was still learning to walk again and her confidence was at an all time low, but Mario proved not only to be the incentive she needed but also a helping hand; happy to work at her own pace.

She says: "I still felt like a china doll, like I was going to smash if I hit the floor again. But thanks to Mario, every day just got easier and easier. I love him to bits."

Not only has Fiona's life changed forever thanks to her partnership with her beloved rescue pony, but the cheeky cob has found a home for life too, with Fiona saying she could never part with him. Turning to Mario, she adds: "You're Super Mario, aren't you?"

"I still felt like a china doll, like I was going to smash if I hit the floor again. But thanks to Mario, every day just got easier and easier. I love him to bits."

Fiona Bloomfield





Mario has the best of both worlds. He's learning to jump but is also happy to munch on grass in the field.



You can read Mario and Fiona's full story at bluecross.org.uk/supermario

BEAR & THE NECESSITIES OF LIFE

Bear's unique appearance may still reflect his traumatic start to life, but for the playful kitten it's a distant memory – thanks to Blue Cross and his loving new owners...

Poor Bear was in an appalling state when he arrived at our Suffolk rehoming centre with a severe strain of cat flu, alongside two other kittens from different litters in the same home.

He could barely see due to ulcers on his eyes and his inner eyelids fusing together, which meant he needed two operations within a matter of weeks to save his vision.

The little kitten was left with deformed eyelids as a result, but his different looks didn't put off Tara Newton and Luke Thomas from rehoming him – in fact, they love him even more for it.

"We wanted to give a home to a cat with a disability, as a lot of people overlook them. I saw Bear on the website and I just knew we had to have him. He looked like such a lovely little guy and he is," said Tara.

"When we met him he just took to us straight away, he was climbing all over us," said Luke.

So it was love at first sight for the couple, who made a seven hour round trip to take Bear, now two years old, back home with them to Yeovil, Somerset. He wasted no time in settling in.

"To us he doesn't look any different, he's perfect. We love him so much, he's such a good boy," said Tara.

"He is so loving and affectionate. To go through so much at such a young age and still be so friendly is amazing."

Despite having partially obstructed eyesight, he is now thriving and takes the four times daily eye drops and morning and night eye baths in his stride.

"He's so good and just lets us do it. As his tear ducts are deformed due to all the operations he has the eye drops to make sure his eyes stay lubricated, but he doesn't mind," said Tara.

The type of cat flu that Bear contracted will remain in his body for life as there is no cure.







“He’s brought lots of mischief and fun with him and makes our home a happier one.”



Read more about Bear at
bluecross.org.uk/bear

Tara and Luke will keep a close eye on any signs of flare-ups such as a runny nose or sneezing, but he’s had no further problems so far.

And he has gone from being the quietest of the three kittens brought to the Suffolk rehoming centre to tearing around the house wanting to play all the time – and his tiny “chirp” has turned into a miaow.

“He’s now the most playful cat we’ve ever known,” said Tara.

Luke added: “He’s brought lots of mischief and fun with him and makes our home a happier one. We couldn’t imagine life without him now.” ❖





We love to hear from you

Please send us your news and pictures of your pets!



CATS SLEEP ANYWHERE

Back in 2010 we took on a frail, elderly cat from our local Blue Cross rehoming centre, intending to let him live out his remaining years in the love and comfort of our home.

Norman was always on the lookout for somewhere warm to curl up and take a snooze. The draining board was one of his favourite places as it warmed up nicely when the dishwasher was operating below.

Not long after we had him we noticed that the 'digi-box' which operated the TV in the kitchen kept fusing. Three times we had to replace it in as many months!

It was only after my husband came in late one night to find Norman curled up, fast asleep and dribbling into the box that we realised why! (It's a small wonder that he didn't blow himself up, along with the whole house!).

After five happy and peaceful years with us Norman passed away in his sleep at the age of around 19 and as my teenage son so eloquently puts it,

"Remember Norman?"

Who is probably now dribbling on God's knee."

Mrs Carole Casan, Tiverton



BUSTER AND HARVEY

Last issue, we told you the story of Buster and Harvey, two elderly dogs who we found a new home for together after both of their owners sadly passed away within just a few months. Their tale received an overwhelming response, with many of you getting in touch on social media with kind words and good wishes.

Here are a few of the comments:

Oh what a heartbreaking story but I am so pleased that they are together and have another loving home, they are the lucky ones and I send hugs to the owners' daughter who tried her very best.

Keryn, via Facebook

What a poignant story, well done everyone involved for making this happy ending happen. People like this help to restore our faith in human nature.

Carol, via Facebook

What a beautiful ending to this story, so happy they are thriving and so settled.

Fiona, via Facebook

Read Buster and Harvey's story again at bluecross.org.uk/busterandharvey

Would you like to see your pet on this page?

We love to hear how Blue Cross pets are changing lives. Please email your letters and photos to editor@bluecross.org.uk or write to *For Pets* Editor, Blue Cross, Shilton Road, Burford, Oxon OX18 4PF.

Find us on Facebook & Twitter.

 @The_Blue_Cross  @thebluecrossUK



GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

In remembrance and loving memory of our dearly beloved cat Chloe who sadly passed away on 11 July 2017, aged 14 years. Never to be forgotten.

RIP xxxxxx

Mr Manfield, by post



A HAPPY HOME

Five years ago today we adopted little Dillon from your Oxford branch. He had quite a few challenges at first with aggression, but over time he captured our hearts, settled down, and of course became a special member of the family.

He brings so much joy into our lives and we adore him. He has changed a fair bit too... much more hairy now!

Lisa Trowse, via Facebook

BITESIZE STORIES

ALL THE LATEST NEWS FROM BLUE CROSS

AMY BITES OFF MORE THAN SHE CAN CHEW

One little shih tzu with eyes too big for her stomach needed surgery after gobbling down an ice lolly stick in one gulp.

Five-year-old Amy was taken to our Grimsby animal hospital by her worried owner. Vets first tried to make Amy sick but the stick did not appear. The little dog needed an operation to remove the wood from her stomach.

Amy's owner, Zoe Weakley, said: "As a nurse myself I knew swallowing the stick whole would not be good for Amy. She is quite a greedy dog and does tend to eat her food in one gulp so I'm not completely surprised she did this. We will be keeping an even closer eye on her from now on."

Blue Cross is warning pet owners to keep a watchful eye over their scavengers this summer, and get them to a vet quickly if they do swallow anything they shouldn't.



WHATEVER HAPPENED TO?

Every year Blue Cross finds families for thousands of homeless pets. We've caught up with a familiar face to see how they're doing.

Kaska

When Kaska arrived in our care, it was clear from his condition that he'd spent a long and lonely time on the streets. His fur was badly matted and he had sores all over his skin which must have been very painful. When we checked him over, we found poor Kaska had a growth the size of an orange on his tummy.

Thanks to generous help from Blue Cross supporters, we were able to give Kaska the operation he needed to get better, and once he was well we found him a loving home. We were thrilled to see his tail wagging again.



Thank you so much for your support in 2017!

CROSS CHANNEL KITTY

A French kitten who stowed away inside a car bonnet and made his way across the Channel has a new home now, thanks to Blue Cross.

A holidaying couple reported the youngster after they'd returned from a trip from St Malo in France to Portsmouth. They believe he must have got into the car on the deck of the overnight ferry.

Renee Bliss, who found the kitten in her car, said: "When we stopped at the services I couldn't believe what I was hearing – miaowing coming from the bonnet of the car, especially as we had just driven for almost an hour and a half without stopping. When he was finally freed, the poor little thing looked terrified."

After trying to rescue the cat themselves and failing, the car was transported to the nearest garage, where the kitten – now named Malo – was released.

Malo had to be quarantined for 21 days, but thanks to our Southampton rehoming centre he now has a loving home.



FASHION VICTIM

An emaciated French bulldog is lucky to be alive after being found dumped in a London park with gaping cavities the size of golf balls in her abdomen.

Named Dorothy by our team, she had been used for breeding and had just given birth to a litter of puppies before being cruelly cast aside when she became ill.

Weighing in at a skeletal 6kg, Dorothy's ribs and spine could clearly be seen to protrude from her body when she was brought to our Merton animal hospital. Her wounds were caused by an untreated breeding-related condition called mastitis.

The increasing popularity of French bulldogs (see page 13), fuelled by celebrity ownership, social media and popular culture, has led to a surge in overbreeding of such 'fashionable' breeds and contributed to a rise in unscrupulous breeders and puppy farms that are fulfilling demand.

Dorothy improved daily thanks to our dedicated vets, nurses, support staff, foster carers and rehoming teams. She now has a happy new home.

As well as treating and finding new homes for the victims of the fashionable pet trade, Blue Cross is campaigning for better laws to put an end to animals like Dorothy being used as profit-making breeding machines.

Becky Thwaites, Head of Public Affairs at Blue Cross, said: "The

huge demand for puppies and fashion breeds such as French bulldogs has led to an increase in unscrupulous breeders who care more about making a quick buck than about the welfare of the pets they are selling, or their parents.

"Blue Cross is calling for a reform of breeding and sales legislation to stop the suffering of so many pets bred only for profit."



BOWWOW HAUS LONDON

If you're taking a trip to the capital this spring, make sure to visit this installation like no other.

BowWow Haus features a collection of unique dog kennels designed by a number of accomplished architects, artists, designers and celebrities – which will all be auctioned off to raise money for Blue Cross. The wacky and wonderful kennels will appear at St Pancras International station and areas all over London from March this year.

Each kennel will be sold to the highest bidder in April, with the proceeds funding the rebuilding of our Hertfordshire rehoming centre.



NEW TRICKS

Looking for that extra bit of help with your pooch's manners? Try our new **free online training videos**.

Blue Cross Senior Behaviourist Ryan Neile, and his collie Tok, will help you and your dog master the basics every canine needs to know, including fetch, down, and the all-important recall. **Head on over to our website to download your free guide and watch the videos today, at bluecross.org.uk/training**



As the mercury looks set to rise this summer, Blue Cross is issuing a warning to cat owners of the dangers of open windows and balconies.

Last year we treated several curious kitties for broken bones and internal injuries, and sadly some cats did not survive their falls from height.

One-year-old Mishmish fell four storeys during the night after owners left the window slightly open for cool air. Her owner said: "We didn't realise she could fit through the gap. I found her outside, very quiet and calm, I knew something was wrong so I phoned up Blue Cross to get her seen by a vet. I was devastated to find out she'd broken her pelvis."

Seb Prior, Blue Cross Senior Veterinary Surgeon, said: "It is a myth to think that cats will always fall on all four paws.

"Put safety mesh firmly across windows so that cats don't fall out. Don't let your cat sunbathe on a balcony even if you think they won't jump or fall – it is a risk for any cat and the consequences can be devastating."

If your cat does fall from more than one storey, get them checked by a vet, even if they appear to be fine.

Back together again

Twenty years after they first met, a plucky Shetland pony has been reunited with his besotted owner.

Naomi Baskerville was eight years old when John Willy became her very first pony, two years after they'd first met at riding school.

But by age 14, Naomi had outgrown the small pony and increasing schoolwork meant she had less time to spend with her beloved pet. She found him a loving new home, but she always missed him.

"When it hit me that I would probably never see John Willy again I was devastated," said Naomi.

"It is the biggest regret of my life. I thought I would never get over the loss of my old friend and I was miserable for months."

A chance visit to our rehoming centre in Rolleston, Staffordshire, many years later proved to be the first step in Naomi being reunited with her childhood pet. Naomi spotted John Willy on a poster but he had a happy home; bittersweet news.

Months later, John Willy needed a retirement home and Naomi jumped at the chance to welcome him back. Now they are reunited they will never part again. Maria Kavanagh, Horse Welfare Coordinator at our Rolleston rehoming centre said: "We are delighted they have been reunited after all these years. Fate has brought them back together."



You can read John Willy's story at bluecross.org.uk/johnwilly

BEHIND THE SCENES

After a shoulder injury forced her to quit her job, Stephanie Attwood decided to use her creative skills to give something back...

"This has brought so much to my life, I'm happier than I have been in years," said Stephanie, Retail Volunteer at our charity shop in Marlborough, Wiltshire.

"In my youth I used to work in retail as a window dresser and doing all the visual merchandising, so I thought I could bring these skills into my volunteering at the Marlborough shop. My manager is lovely and just gives me the window so I can do my art.

"I go in on a Monday and Friday morning and have a rummage about to see what we have had in, looking for ideas. For example, in June we went with a Glastonbury theme as we had that festival coming up, so we filled the window with hippy-style clothes.

"I have two children, aged 14 and 16, so doing a couple of days a week is perfect. It fits in with being a mum.

"It's lovely because customers do come in and chat to you and say: 'Oh, I love that, or I like this'. You get a rapport going with them and it just makes you feel good.

"If you have some spare hours and you want to give something back, I couldn't recommend volunteering with Blue Cross enough. I love the whole ethos and history of the charity."

Find your perfect volunteer role at bluecross.org.uk/volunteer



IN LOVING MEMORY

The family and friends of a lifelong animal lover have made a generous donation to Blue Cross in his memory.

Arthur Thomas Worrall from Torrington, Devon, passed away in June at the age of 88 and £400 has since been raised in his name for pets in need.

A keen rider, Mr Worrall joined the Blues and Royals at Horse Guards at the age of 17 and later went on to become part of the Metropolitan Police's Mounted Branch where he worked for 30 years.

On retirement, he even took his beloved police horse with him and was riding up to the age of 75.

Mr Worrall's wife, Myra, said: "Arthur loved all animals, especially horses and birds.

"When he retired 35 years ago, we moved to Devon. He was the first to be able to take his police horse, Anne, with him. She bred two wonderful foals and lived until she was 28 years old.

"Arthur also had a lovely collection of birds over the years including pheasants, pigeons, parakeets, geese, ducks and peacocks. He loved nature and being outdoors.

"He was still riding at the age of 75 and cared for his birds until recently. Sadly he died on June 17, two days after our 40th wedding anniversary."

Mrs Worrall added: "We all miss him very much and hope that his memory will continue with the help this £400 will give to animals."

We're a charity and we don't receive any government funding so we rely on donations to pay for our vital work. We are so grateful for the generosity of Mr Worrall's friends and relatives, which will help us be there for sick, injured or homeless dogs, cats, horses and small animals.





WIN! A LUXURY DOG COLLAR AND LEAD

A luxury destination for pets and their humans, Hiro + Wolf design stylish collars and accessories for cats and dogs.

Nestled in the heart of East London, all pieces are made using fabrics hand selected from ethical makers from around the world. Designed and sampled in their studio under the watchful eyes of the in-house hounds, all leads and collars are then skilfully trimmed with durable, luxurious vegetable tan leathers and fitted with hardware by hand in an all-female enterprise in Staffordshire.

View the full range now at hiroandwolf.com

HOW TO ENTER

Answer the following question for your chance to win:

In our *For Pets* news update on page 30, we told you how kitten Malo had to be quarantined, but for how long...? *(please tick)*

- one day
- 21 days
- 200 days

Fill in your name and contact details and post to: *

Freepost BLUE CROSS FOR PETS

Or, enter online at bluecross.org.uk/forpets

Closing date Wednesday 4 April 2018

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

Email:

*Strictly one entry per household.

David Taylor is the winner of the dog-friendly holiday voucher from PetsPyjamas in our autumn 2017 *For Pets* competition. Congratulations! Blue Cross respects your privacy and we will keep your information secure. We will never sell, rent or share your personal data with third parties for their own marketing purposes. We will contact you about our work and the different ways you can support us as in accordance with your preferences*. We may also use your data to better understand what you like to receive and what is most relevant to you. To see more about how we will use your information, visit bluecross.org.uk/privacy *You can change your preferences at any time by contacting our Supporter Care Team on 0300 790 9903 or email info@bluecross.org.uk

FIND US

Discover your local Blue Cross

We have 55 shops and 20 national rehoming network locations.

Our animal hospitals

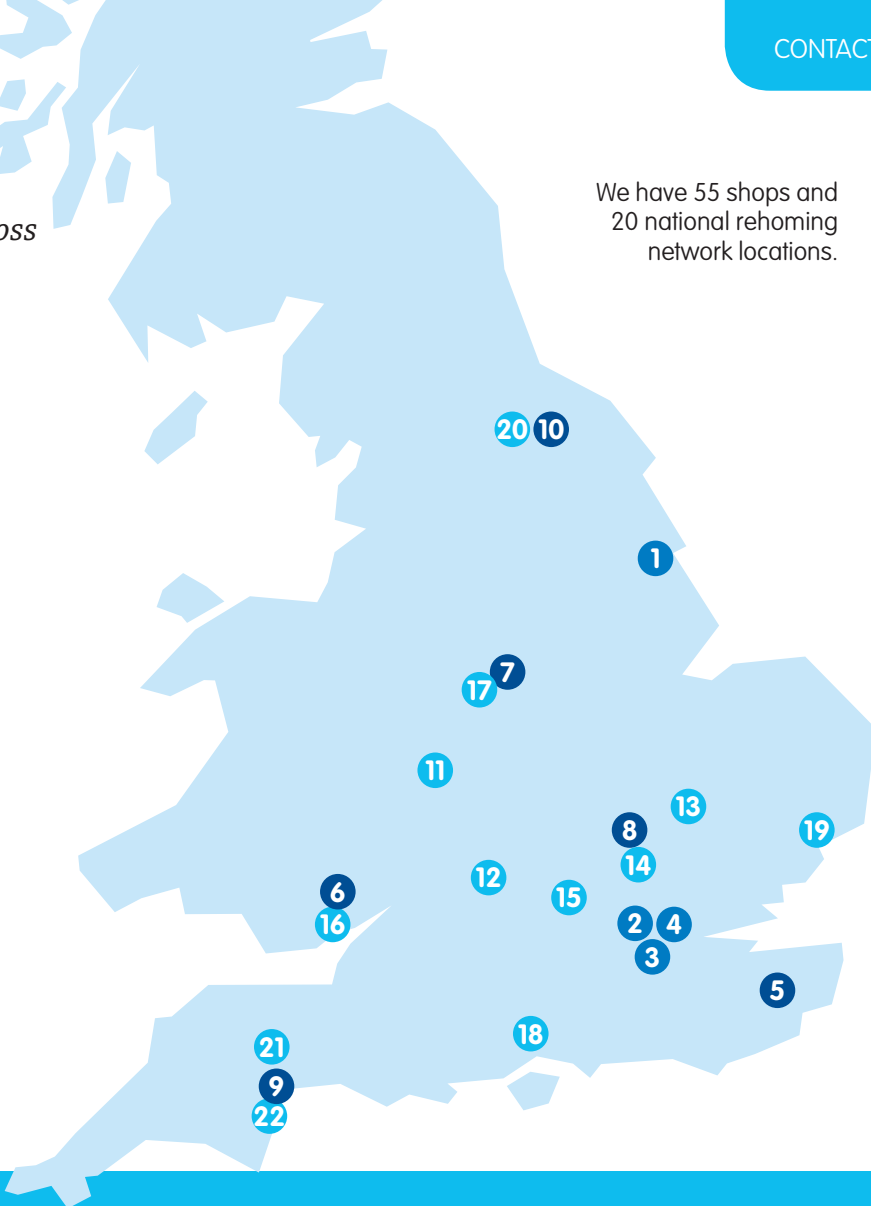
- 1 Grimsby
- 2 Hammersmith
- 3 Merton
- 4 Victoria

Our pet care clinics

- 5 Ashford (Kent) *coming soon*
- 6 Cwmbran
- 7 Derby
- 8 Luton
- 9 Torquay
- 10 York

Our rehoming centres

- 11 Bromsgrove
- 12 Burford
- 13 Cambridge
- 14 Hertfordshire (Kimpton)
- 15 Lewknor
- 16 Newport
- 17 Rolleston
- 18 Southampton
- 19 Suffolk (Ipswich)
- 20 Thirsk
- 21 Tiverton
- 22 Torbay



Say hello, find your nearest Blue Cross or make a donation

Call: 0300 790 9903 **Email:** info@bluecross.org.uk **Visit:** bluecross.org.uk

Write to us: Freepost BLUE CROSS FOR PETS

Book a free education talk

Animal welfare and responsible pet ownership workshops for children and young people in schools, youth groups and clubs.

Call: 0300 111 8950 **Visit:** bluecross.org.uk/education

Pet Bereavement Support Service

Free and confidential support for anyone coping with the loss of a pet, for any reason.

Call: 0800 096 6606. Lines open every day, 8.30am to 8.30pm.

Email: pbssmail@bluecross.org.uk



Pets change lives
We change theirs



Pets change lives
We change theirs

We're a charity that has been helping sick, injured and homeless pets since 1897

"Remember me in your Will"

If pets have a place in your heart, please find a place for them in your Will. A gift in your Will can help secure the future for thousands of pets.

Order your FREE information pack on making or amending a Will and leaving a gift to Blue Cross online at bluecross.org.uk/gift-your-will

Or complete the coupon and send to:
Freepost BLUE CROSS FOR PETS

Alternatively, call or email and quote: B118
Telephone: 0300 777 1757
Email: legacy@bluecross.org.uk

bluecross.org.uk

Title:

First name:

Surname:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

Thank you for your continued support.

Blue Cross is a charity registered in England and Wales (224392) and in Scotland (SC040154). *From time to time we may wish to communicate with you by phone with news about the pets you are helping and ways you can help in the future. If you are happy for us to do this, please fill in your details above.



MOVING HOUSE?

Please don't forget to let us know if you have moved home recently. Updating us is really important, because without your new address, we are unable to claim Gift Aid on your donations, which is worth 25p for every pound you donate.

Remember to update your pet's microchip details when you move, too.

Call us on **0300 790 9903** or email info@bluecross.org.uk or fill in and return this coupon to:
Freepost BLUE CROSS FOR PETS

Please note, we select our mailings up to 28 days in advance, so you may receive one or two more to your old address before the change takes effect. We sincerely apologise for any inconvenience.

Old address

Title First name

Surname

Address

Postcode

New address

Address

Postcode

Put the kettle on for Paws for Tea!

Please send me further information about how I can get involved in Paws for Tea. For more information complete and return the form or email events@bluecross.org.uk



Title First name

Surname

Address

Postcode

Telephone

Email

*You can change your preferences at any time by contacting our Supporter Care Team on 0300 790 9903 or email info@bluecross.org.uk

Please return this slip in the post to: Freepost BLUE CROSS FOR PETS

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