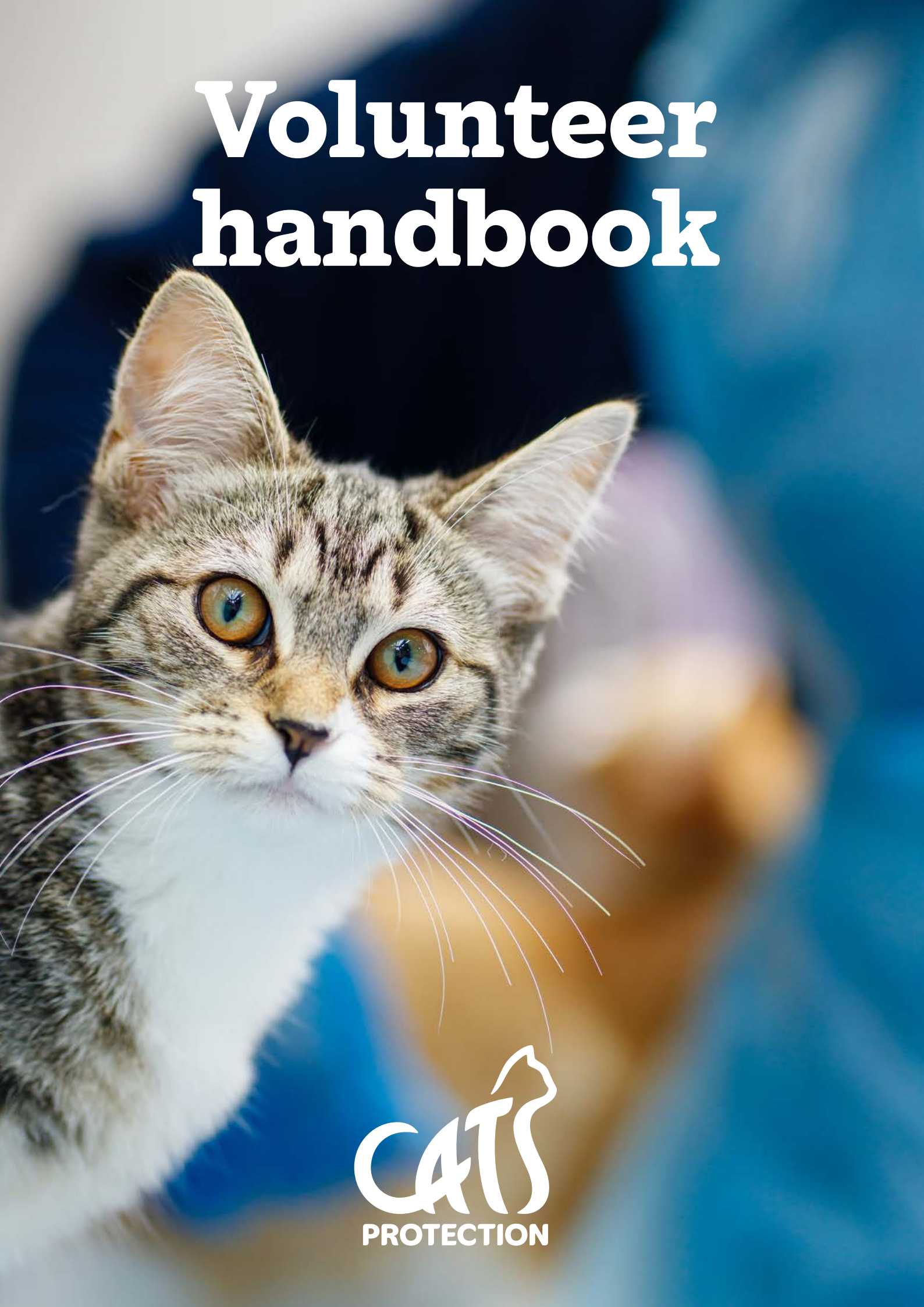
Volunteer handbook



CAT PROTECTION

Hello and welcome to Cats Protection!

Helo a chroeso i Cats Protection!

Halo agus fàilte air Cats Protection!

We share our lives with cats. They bring happiness to millions of us every day.

Yet too many cats don't get the care and kindness they deserve. At Cats Protection we stand up for every cat. At the forefront of research on cat welfare we use our decades of experience to help all cats and support owners to keep their pets happy and healthy. Our campaigns change laws to give cats more protection and we continue to call for a better deal for cats. In every corner of the UK our passionate volunteers, employees and supporters are using their kindness and expertise to make life better for millions of cats and the people who care for them.

How to contact us

03000 12 12 12 (National Information Line)
volunteering@cats.org.uk

For more information

cats.org.uk/volunteer or scan the code.

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One small action can make a big difference!

Could you do one of these today?

- Tell a friend about Cats Protection and our work in your community
- Recognise and celebrate each other's efforts
- Develop new skills and knowledge with one of our courses
- Follow us on Facebook, X (Twitter) or Instagram

Thank you for joining our team

Welcome to Cats Protection

We are a movement of people championing the welfare of cats. Our volunteers bring unique skills, experience, knowledge and passion to help cats and people across the UK.

I hope you will have an enjoyable and rewarding volunteer experience with us and that you enjoy being part of Cats Protection as much as I do.

This handbook gives you an overview of our organisation, the information that is important for your role, and celebrates everything volunteers bring to our charity. It is a useful guide for you to read and keep going back to as you develop in your role.

Thank you for everything you will do for cats and welcome to the team!

John May, Chief Executive

Your information (please keep this information safe)

My volunteer manager is:

.....

I can contact them on:

.....

Shop/centre address:

.....

.....

Other important contact details:

.....

My volunteer role is/roles are:

.....

I joined Cats Protection on:

.....

Other useful information:

.....

Our journey

Since 1927 we have helped cats across the UK and helped people to better understand their needs. As a community of volunteers, employees, supporters and partners, we've improved the lives of millions of cats and transformed the way people see and care for cats.

To learn more about our long and wonderful history and how we've grown through the years please see our 'Welcome to Cats Protection' online module available on Learn for Cats.

1927

We are founded as the Cats Protection League by animal welfare campaigner Jessey Wade.

1940

We introduced the 'Tailwavers scheme', a fundraising appeal for cats impacted by World War 2.

1950s

A legacy enables the charity to open its first shelter at Haslemere.

1960s

We launched our first neutering voucher scheme. This was extended nationwide from 1970.

1994

We introduced microchipping to all shelters, ensuring every cat rehomed is microchipped, neutered and vaccinated.

1998

We changed our name to Cats Protection.

2022

We launched our new 10-year strategy, called All for Cats, setting out our goals, vision, mission and values, to help people see the world through cats' eyes.

2023

We launched our new brand to help us reach and engage new people and inspire our remarkable existing supporters, volunteers and employees; communicating more clearly who we are, what we stand for and the impact we make for cats. We are making a better life for cats, because life is better with cats.

Did you know?

In the last five years* we have...

- helped an average of **157,000** cats and kittens a year
- rehomed around **30,000** cats each year
- delivered more than **1,000** talks to an audience of around **32,000** children and adults each year
- reunited an average of **2,300** cats with their owners a year
- helped neuter an average of **130,000** cats and kittens a year*

*Neutering activities for cats in care, owned cats and feral cats

... as well as successfully campaigned to change the law to better protect cats

Our vision:

to create a society where every cat has their best possible life because they are protected, cared for and understood by everyone.

Our purpose:

to help people see the world through cats' eyes.

Our mission:

we are a movement of people championing the welfare of cats. We lead society in a richer understanding of all cats and care for those that need our help.

Our shared values are brought to life through our behaviours. It's how we make a difference and make Cats Protection an organisation everyone can be proud of.

We put cats first

Cats are at the centre of all we do. We care for them, ensure their welfare, and help others to understand and support them better. We are objective and make decisions that deliver long-term impact for cats.

We work as one

We collaborate, trust and support each other, creating a safe and inclusive environment. We do our best, and bring out the best in others, to deliver greater impact for cats.

We are courageous

We step out of our comfort zones to stand up for what we believe in, and challenge when things are wrong. We take responsibility for everything we do and think about how we can do better.

We are knowledgeable

We know our stuff. But we don't know everything. We are curious, keen to learn and evolve. We turn to others when we need answers and willingly share what we know.

We are compassionate

We act and communicate with consideration and kindness. We do the right thing; for cats, individuals and the organisation. We make difficult decisions and help people understand the reasons why.

Our values and behaviours help us celebrate all that is good within Cats Protection. They unite us and describe how we can make an even greater difference to cats and people, together.

All for Cats

For more information on our values and behaviours please visit CatNav or scan the code.

Volunteering expectations

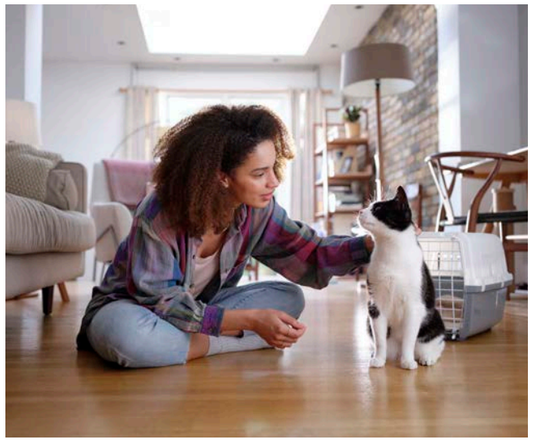
Volunteering with us is a partnership, and we're dedicated to providing a great environment where you can share your skills, knowledge and experiences. We want every volunteer to feel valued and appreciated for their time and expertise. We work together to make sure your experience, and that of other volunteers, is positive and rewarding. Our values guide how we interact with and support one another.

What you can expect from Cats Protection

- We'll agree tasks and roles based on clear role descriptions
- You'll receive an induction, training and support tailored to your role
- We'll make sure you know who to turn to for help or if any adjustments are needed
- We'll treat you and everyone involved with Cats Protection with respect, following our values and commitment to equity and diversity
- If you feel unfairly treated, we'll guide you through the steps to raise a concern and offer support
- We'll provide a safe environment and suitable insurance while you volunteer with us
- We'll gratefully accept your help and support you if you need to say 'no' or scale back
- We'll ensure you're not overwhelmed and that you're comfortable with your level of involvement
- We'll encourage you to take on new challenges when you are ready
- You'll have opportunities to share your ideas and help shape the future of the charity
- Together, we'll make a real difference for cats across the UK

What we expect from you

- To complete the tasks agreed upon in your role description
- To embrace our values (see page 7) and the behaviours that reflect them
- To attend and actively participate in your induction and any ongoing training or support sessions relevant to your role
- To raise any concerns about your volunteering experience as soon as possible
- To help create a welcoming atmosphere, work as a team with other volunteers and employees, and treat everyone with respect in line with our commitment to equity and diversity
- To stay within the responsibilities of your volunteer role
- To communicate openly, honestly and respectfully, ensuring that your words and actions are inclusive and non-discriminatory
- To follow Cats Protection policies, procedures and guidelines
- To let us know as soon as possible if you can't attend, fulfil your volunteer duties, or if you decide to stop volunteering with us



Caring for cats and kittens

We are a movement of people from every corner of the UK. We have different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives but are united in our purpose of helping people to see the world through cats' eyes.

Let's look at the roles in which this movement of people make a difference to cats every day.

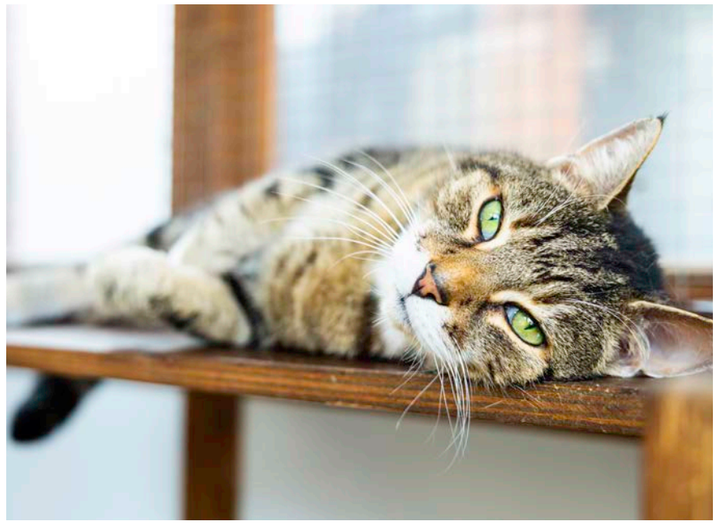
The Board of Trustees

The Trustees are the governing body of Cats Protection and are volunteers.

Connect

Connect is the volunteer consultative body who guide the Trustees to consider a wide range of perspectives and views. Essentially they are the voice of our volunteers.

We also have an Employee Forum for employees to discuss matters that affect their working experience.



Chief Executive and Senior Leadership team

Our Chief Executive, John May, along with the Senior Leadership team, oversees and supports both employees and volunteers, ensuring the organisation runs smoothly. John, a lifelong cat lover, and his team are also responsible for maintaining the positive image and reputation of Cats Protection. They regularly review our systems and structures to make sure we remain an effective and well-run organisation.

Our network of branches

Cats Protection has volunteer branches across the UK.

Branches are groups that are run entirely by volunteers, usually from their own homes with support from various employee teams. Our branches take in cats in need and ensure they receive the veterinary care and attention needed to help them be ready for adoption. They also help raise funds to directly help cats in their care; facilitate the neutering of thousands of cats every year and help spread cat welfare messages.

Let's look at some of the volunteer activities and roles within a branch.

Committee volunteers support and lead our branches by planning activity and encouraging positive communications. They promote the branch locally and encourage teamwork and collaboration. They also oversee financial, homing and cat care standards within the group and help ensure policies and procedures are followed.

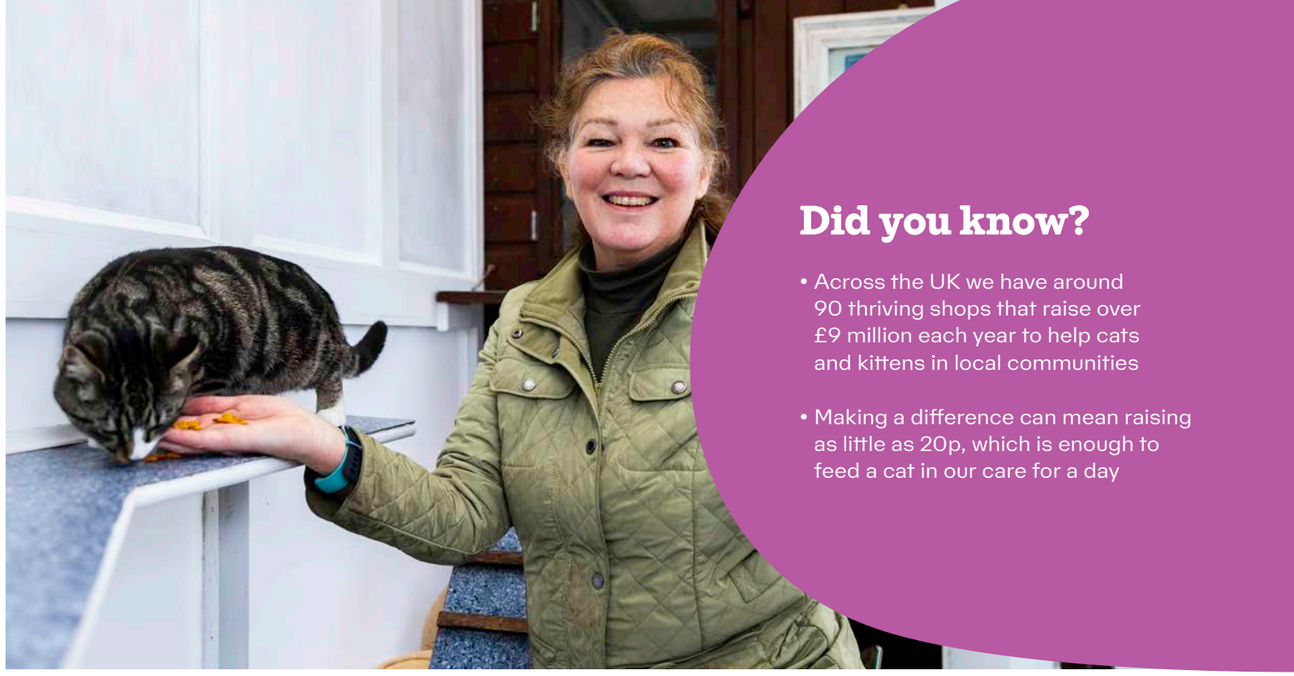
Support and administration roles contribute to the smooth running of our volunteer groups and teams by providing valuable administrative support. Activities include responding to enquiries and answering questions from members of the public, for example about lost and found cats; recording and sharing relevant information related to their volunteer team; and providing support and advice to members of the public who may wish to adopt a cat.

Cat Welfare teams are made up of volunteers in hands-on cat care roles such as fosterers, all with the shared aim of taking in cats in need and ensuring they receive the veterinary care, support, love and attention needed to help them be ready for adoption.

Fundraising teams are made up of volunteers who use their imagination, skills and passion for cats to engage with their supporters and raise much needed funds for their team.

Publicity volunteers use their expertise to raise our profile through press releases, distributing posters and flyers, newsletters, photo and video imagery, social media, and their local Cats Protection website.

Trap, neuter and return (TNR) volunteers set humane traps to safely capture feral cats, take them to vets to be neutered and return them to their territory, as well as building relationships in communities and promoting Cats Protection TNR programmes. They also promote neutering to vets and answer queries from members of the public.



Did you know?

- Across the UK we have around 90 thriving shops that raise over £9 million each year to help cats and kittens in local communities
- Making a difference can mean raising as little as 20p, which is enough to feed a cat in our care for a day

Volunteer champions contribute to the smooth running of our volunteer groups and teams by providing valuable recruitment, induction and recognition support and thus promoting a culture of volunteering best practice.

Neutering volunteers play an important role in helping promote neutering in local communities. They build relationships with members of the public, encourage people to neuter their cats, dispel myths about neutering and ultimately help prevent unwanted cats in the future.

Our centres

Volunteers in our centres support a core team of employees in caring for cats and kittens on site. Centres may consist of indoor or outdoor rehoming pens, as well as dedicated areas for cats when they are admitted into care, pregnant or unwell.

We have a variety of centre volunteer roles to suit different experiences, interests, and the time they can give. For example, they could:

- support the cats in our care, feeding them, cleaning their pens, enriching their experience through play, exercise and handling until they are happy and confident enough to find their forever homes
- provide vital assistance to our teams and volunteer groups in the local area by transporting equipment, litter, food, and even cats!
- provide excellent customer service to visiting members of the public
- support with local fundraising to generate income for the cats in our care
- use their passion for the outdoors to help make our Cats Protection sites welcoming and enjoyable places for cats, people and wildlife
- help keep Cats Protection sites safe, tidy and welcoming

We have centres across the UK that help thousands of cats every year and like our branches, some have volunteer fosterers who look after cats and kittens in their own homes. Our centre volunteers and employees also spread cat welfare messages across their communities and help prevent unwanted kittens through neutering and trap, neuter and return programmes.

Shops

Our Retail team is made up of volunteers and employees with the shared aim of raising funds to help cats in need.

Our retail volunteer roles are varied and range from customer service, till operating, visual merchandising, van driving and even updating our social media pages.

Our charity shops are a window to the whole of Cats Protection. They present a great opportunity for promoting the work of the wider charity and provide a high street presence for their respective branches.

Education volunteers

With the support of Community Education Officers, our education volunteers promote and deliver carefully designed, interactive talks, share cat welfare messages and help everyone to better understand cats. They deliver talks to schools, colleges, community groups and many other types of audiences.

You can find out more in 'The role of an education speaker' module available on Learn for Cats.

Paws to Listen volunteers

Our Paws to Listen volunteers provide emotional support via telephone and email for anyone grieving the loss of a cat. This may be through bereavement, or also for a cat that has gone missing, has been reluctantly rehomed, or is nearing the end of their life. The volunteers can also give practical information about how to celebrate the life of a cat, how to talk to children about grief, grief in surviving pets, and the available after-death options, for example individual/communal cremation, burial.

Lifeline volunteers

Owning a pet can be a barrier to someone escaping domestic abuse, as many refuges are unable to accept pets. To help protect pets and people, Cats Protection offers Lifeline, a free and confidential cat fostering service for people experiencing domestic abuse. Through a network of cat fosterers, the service places cats into foster homes, enabling their owner to get to safety knowing that their beloved cat will also be safe, until they can be reunited again.

National Helpline volunteers

Our National Helpline volunteers, alongside employee advisors, answers calls and enquiries coming into the charity via the National Information Line and a large number of individual branch lines within our Contact Centre. The Contact Centre is an important element of the charity's customer experience and operational offering; allowing us to deliver a professional and consistent service to our customers, to agreed service levels and standards, while supporting our volunteers and employees on the ground.

Fundraising volunteers

Fundraising volunteers are supported by our Community Fundraising Hub team. Whether supporting a branch, cat centre or across a local area, our fundraising volunteers use their varied skills and passions to raise much needed funds for the cats and kittens in our care.

Cat Detective volunteers

Cat Detective volunteers monitor cat-selling websites and gather data on concerning adverts. This helps us to enhance cat welfare through collaborative working with websites, encouraging better advertising practices.

Other ways our volunteers are part of the Cats Protection team

We also have volunteers supported by teams across the United Kingdom, involved in a range of activities including neutering, social media, IT, learning and development, media and health and safety.

Why did you become a Trustee with Cats Protection?

"I feel very strongly that this is a fantastic organisation and I wanted to be able to do more and use my professional skills to be able to help cats in the best way I can."

What's been the best thing about volunteering for Cats Protection?

"Aside from the good feeling from volunteering my time to help cats, I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting lots of different people from all kinds of backgrounds, who have been brought together because of a love of cats. I have learned so many interesting things about cats while being able to use my other professional skills and experience to help the charity, it's a two-way process!"

Sarah, Trustee, South East England

What is involved in being a cat care volunteer in the centre?

"A typical shift in the afternoon involves putting away items from the morning cleans, loading the washing machine, folding and putting away clean towels and bedding and sometimes getting a pen ready for a cat. Of course it involves spending time with the cats, giving them the love and attention they need."

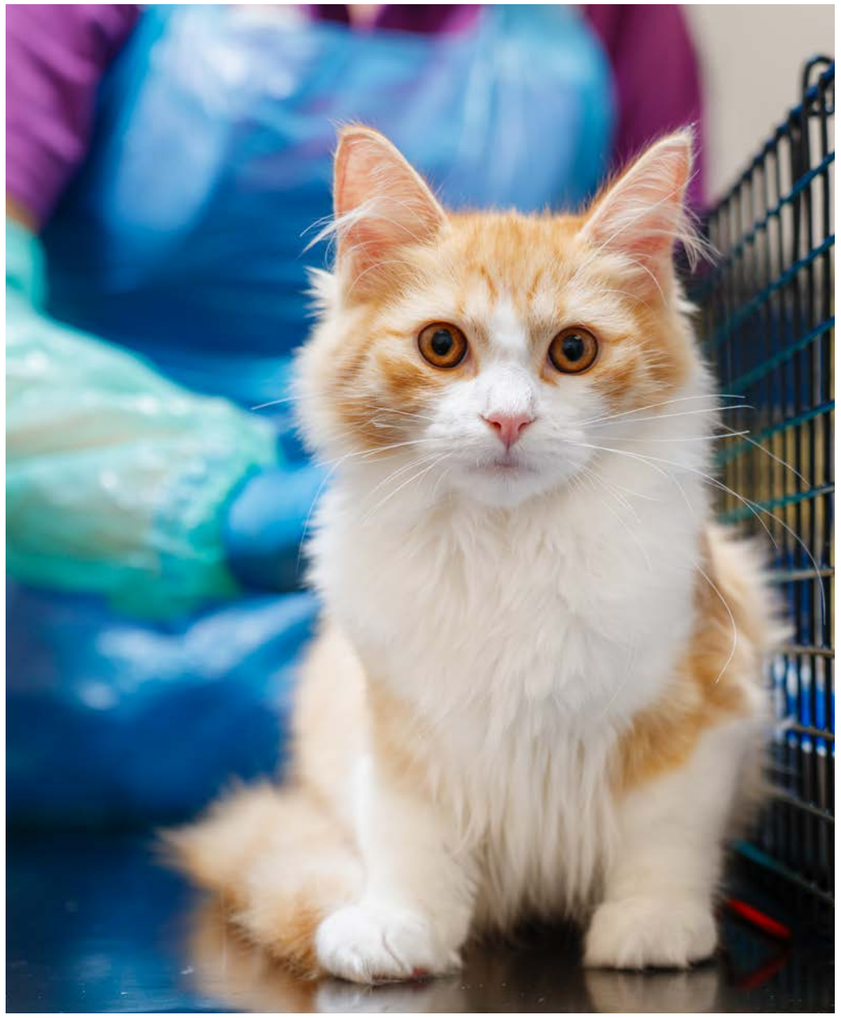
Why did you become a volunteer?

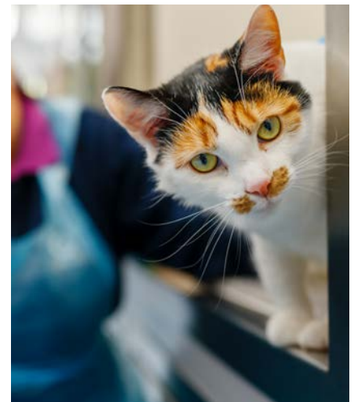
"I chose to volunteer because I wanted to do something meaningful in my week. There are so many cats that need homes and volunteering frees up employee time to handle adoptions. It's so rewarding when a cat finally finds their forever home."

What do you like most about volunteering?

"I benefit greatly from volunteering. It's wonderful to get to know like-minded people and I get to make a difference, however small. The joy I get from seeing a cat go from being scared to being a purr machine is priceless."

Sonia, Cat Care Volunteer, South East England





Supporting you and each other

You bring so much to the organisation, it's important to know what the organisation does to support you during your volunteer journey.

Induction

Your volunteer manager will provide you with and guide you to a lot of information when you begin your role. This handbook is also a vital tool in your induction journey and will provide much of the information you need to help you learn about the charity and where you fit into the bigger team. You should also receive a copy of your role description, so if you haven't had this yet please ask for one from your volunteer manager. Your role description will tell you how you make a difference to cats and kittens.

Wellbeing

At Cats Protection, your wellbeing is as important to us as it is to you. As a movement of people championing the welfare of cats, making sure we look after the welfare of our people and ensuring they are protected and cared for, is equally important.

You can access information on wellbeing support available within Cats Protection by searching 'wellbeing hub' on CatNav or you can access learning and development on wellbeing by scanning the code.

If you have any questions or would like any further information please contact **wellbeing@cats.org.uk**

Support

Your volunteer manager will be your first point of contact for support, this could be a fellow volunteer or it could be an employee.

There are also a number of teams across the organisation that provide guidance, training and support for you in your role. These include the Branch Support Unit, our Safety, Health & Environment team, and our Volunteering Best Practice team to name just a few. You can find out more about all the teams in Cats Protection by viewing our 'Welcome to Cats Protection' module on Learn for Cats and we've also provided a list of useful contacts on the back page of this book.

Volunteer Assistance Programme

Cats Protection values the health and wellbeing of all our volunteers and we know that sometimes people need an additional level of support when they are feeling overwhelmed, stressed or under pressure.

What is a Volunteer Assistance Programme?
The Volunteer Assistance Programme is intended to support volunteers through the everyday challenges faced within work, at home and in their volunteering role which might adversely impact their health and wellbeing.

The Volunteer Assistance Programme offers 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year cover for all Cats Protection volunteers via a Freephone number 0800 030 5182. Please quote you volunteer for Cats Protection.

The service provides access to:
- stress helpline
- structured telephone counselling
- tax advice
- legal advice (does not provide employment law advice)
- elder/childcare advice
- medical information

Are there any additional services available?
Yes. As part of the Volunteer Assistance Programme you have access to a range of online tools, which are all accessible via the Health Assured website healthassuredap.co.uk
These include:
- emotional support
- fitness advice (including video demonstrations)
- personal coaching tool
- health assessment
- medical information

Once you have entered the site you will be prompted for the below login details:

Username: Catsprotection
Password: Volunteers

Equity, diversity and inclusion

We want Cats Protection to be a welcoming, supportive, joyful and inclusive place to volunteer, where everyone feels safe to be themselves.

Being more inclusive brings many benefits. It helps us to attract, and keep, the best people for the roles we have available, improves creativity and innovation, and helps us to connect to a wider audience. All of which ultimately results in us being able to help more cats.

As part of our values we expect all our volunteers and employees to treat each other with respect and kindness; genuinely caring and seeking to understand the different perspectives, needs and expertise of others.

Out-of-pocket expenses

We want volunteering to be accessible to everyone, and reimbursing expenses is an important part of this.

You may incur expenses as part of your volunteering role, for example when travelling to your place of volunteering or travelling to meetings, workshops and training.

Claiming your expenses helps Cats Protection to plan our finances as well as meaning you are not out of pocket. If you want to find out more, please contact your volunteer manager.

Or search for 'expenses' on CatNav or scan the code.

If things go wrong, how we work it out

If problems occur it's important to know that Cats Protection aims to identify and solve them at the earliest possible stage. The problem-solving procedures for volunteers and volunteer managers exist to help deal with complaints and problems quickly, fairly and consistently.

For more information please chat to your volunteer manager or search for 'problem solving' on CatNav or scan the code.

Insurance

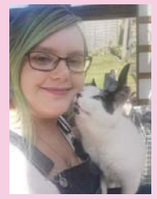
Volunteer activity is covered by the Cats Protection public and employer's liability insurance but it is important that you follow our policies, procedures and risk assessments. Please note, if you drive your own car while volunteering for us you'll need to contact your personal car insurance provider to ensure you are covered. You can find out more about risk assessments and our Driving Policy from your volunteer manager or search for 'risk assessments' or 'driving' on CatNav.

Why did you become a fosterer?

"Working with animals is the only thing that I've ever wanted to do with my life. Unfortunately, I have suffered from Chronic Fatigue Syndrome since the age of 15.

"I started looking into things that I could do with animals from home. I assumed that anything I found would require qualifications and I was largely right, until I came across a web page with a testimonial from a woman about the Cats Protection fostering pen she'd had put up in her garden. Contacting Cats Protection was nerve-wracking, but the reply I got was prompt and positive and everyone that I dealt with along the way was nothing but kind, helpful and supportive."

What's the best bit about being a fosterer?



"To me, they (the foster cats) are a lifeline; they give my days meaning and they've lifted me out of that dark place I was in. They make me smile without fail every morning when I go out to see them and on my worst days, getting piled on by a horde of purring kittens helps me get by more than they will ever know."

Nikita, Fosterer, South West England

What is the best thing about your role as a trap, neuter and return (TNR) volunteer?

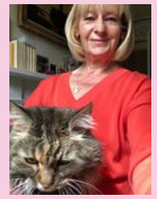
"The best thing about my role as a TNR volunteer is knowing that I am playing a part in helping improve the lives of cats in my area. It is such a great feeling."

What support is available to you as a trap, neuter and return (TNR) volunteer?

"I have a wonderfully supportive Community Engagement Officer. Full training was provided for the role and I have access to CatNav information and online training and resources. The other volunteers in our group are also very supportive and we now have a Community Neutering Assistant who also provides support."

April, TNR Volunteer, Scotland

What's your role?



"I have been a volunteer for Paws to Listen, the Cats Protection grief support service, since 2017. Having stumbled across the possibility, I just knew it was something I really wanted to do. I volunteer from home, often having to fight my cat Tabitha for use of my PC, desk and chair."

What does it involve?

"A typical shift involves calls from, or call backs to, often distraught people who have suffered or are anticipating the loss of a much-loved cat. This can involve a natural death or euthanasia, an accident, the need to rehome or a missing cat. Every call is different and the emotions felt by each caller are individual. But almost all of them express gratitude for the opportunity to discuss their feelings and to be listened to by someone who understands their distress and will never judge."

Why do you do it?

"It can sometimes be an emotionally draining role but it is always hugely rewarding knowing that I have helped someone in pain even just a little bit."

Susan, Paws to Listen Volunteer

Safeguarding

A quick guide

Cats Protection is committed to safeguarding children and adults at risk and protecting anyone that comes into contact with us from harm. At Cats Protection, safeguarding is everybody's responsibility.

What is safeguarding?
Safeguarding means protecting the rights of adults at risk and children to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

What is abuse?
Child abuse is when a child (under 18) is intentionally harmed by an adult or another child. It can be over a period of time but can also be a one-off action. It can be physical, sexual or emotional and it can happen in person or online. It can also be a lack of love, care and attention, this is neglect.

For adults it is when an adult (over 18) who needs care and support is abused, exploited or neglected through the action or inaction of others. The main forms of abuse are physical, financial, neglect, psychological, sexual and discriminatory. Self-neglect is where an adult is failing to meet their basic needs, such as hygiene, health and nutrition, leading to significant risks to their wellbeing. It can result from physical or mental health issues or cognitive impairments.

Children and adults at risk can be affected by more than one type of abuse.

What does this mean for me?
Concerns about abuse can come up for anyone working or volunteering at Cats Protection. They could even come up when we are not at work or volunteering. We can all play an important part in preventing and ending abuse by following the Safeguarding Policy and procedures and following the instructions in the pink box.

You can find more information in the Cats Protection Safeguarding Policy and procedures on CatNav and you must raise any safeguarding concerns with the Safeguarding team. They are there to help and support you.

What to do if an employee or volunteer has a safeguarding concern about a child or adult, or a child or adult makes a disclosure of possible abuse.

If you believe there is an immediate risk of physical harm, then contact the emergency services immediately on **999**.

Inform the Safeguarding team immediately on 01825 741 248 or email at safeguarding@cats.org.uk

In the case of a disclosure, explain that you cannot keep the information confidential, but will only share it with people who can help to keep them safe. If the concern is about the Safeguarding team, inform Caroline Bendelow, the Strategic Lead for Safeguarding immediately.

If necessary, the Safeguarding team will make contact with the police, relevant local children and families social care team, Local Authority Designated Officer or Safeguarding Adults Team, for immediate advice and guidance.

01825 741 248 | safeguarding@cats.org.uk

PROTECTION

Cats Protection is a registered charity 203644 (England and Wales), SC037711 (Scotland) and is listed as a Section 167 institution by the Charity Commission of Northern Ireland. | SAFE_1260 | W80626

Keeping people safe

We ensure that everyone is aware of their role and responsibilities and how we can create and maintain safe environments by providing you with training and guidance.

If you have a concern about a child or adult at risk as part of your volunteering, you can contact **safeguarding@cats.org.uk** or call **01825 741 248**.

In an emergency please contact 999.

Your personal safety is also of paramount importance and we have risk assessments for volunteering activities, core health and safety training and a dedicated Safety, Health & Environment team that can provide guidance and advice on health and safety issues relating to your volunteering.

Contact them on SHE@cats.org.uk

Safeguarding at Cats Protection

It's everyone's responsibility

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PROTECTION

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Children and adults at risk can be affected by more than one type of abuse.

Every volunteer and employee is expected to follow our Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and undertake safeguarding training.

If you need assistance with this ask your manager or team leader to help.

Three ways to make safeguarding part of our everyday work and volunteering...

- **Prevention:** Recognise the signs of abuse and neglect. Ensure that you follow our Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Safeguarding Code of Conduct at all times.
- **Reporting:** If you are concerned about an adult with care and support needs or a child who is experiencing or at risk of abuse contact the Safeguarding team on **01825 741 248** or email **safeguarding@cats.org.uk** as soon as possible.

If someone is at immediate risk of harm always call the emergency services on 999.

- **Response:** Once a concern is raised the Safeguarding team will follow this up, making sure people are safe and reporting to external agencies where necessary.

Cats Protection is a registered charity 203644 (England and Wales), SC037711 (Scotland) and is listed as a Section 167 institution by the Charity Commission of Northern Ireland | SAFE_1261 | W80625

Communicating with each other

Cats Protection is a large organisation that we want you to feel a part of straight away. We have a number of ways we communicate with each other to help you feel part of our Cats Protection team and ultimately have the best volunteering experience possible.

Listening to our volunteers

Cats Protection wants to listen to the views of our volunteers and involve them when appropriate in the development of the charity. There are a number of ways you can share your ideas, for example, informally during chats and catch-ups with your volunteer manager or contributing to discussions on the Forum, being involved in projects such as helping design or review a new resource and giving feedback through our people surveys or evaluation processes. Our only ask is that feedback is given and received in line with our values of courage and compassion.

Keeping you informed

At Cats Protection, our internal communications refers to how we all communicate, collaborate and connect within the organisation. That means we're all internally communicating all the time. Two of our main ways of keeping you informed include:

Cats Update

The *Cats Update* is a fortnightly communication which is sent by email every other Wednesday. It focuses predominantly on operational communication that pulls together key projects, events and news from across Cats Protection and lets everyone know 'what's happening now'.

Chief Executive online webinars and discussions

The Chief Executive online webinars and discussions are hosted by the Chief Executive and Senior Leadership team. These online sessions focus on discussing updates from across the organisation and hearing questions from volunteers and employees. Your volunteer manager will also keep you up to date with what goes on in the charity.

Celebrating you!

We want to shout about your impact from the rooftops and ensure that our volunteers as groups and individuals are thanked for all they do.

We have a Special Thanks and Recognition Scheme (STARS) which helps recognise individuals and groups with a range of badges, statues and certificates. To find out more about our STARS, search for 'STARS' on CatNav or scan the code.

Recognition badges

One year | Three years | Five years | Seven years | 10 years | Exceptional contribution

VOLUNTEERS' WEEK

Volunteers' Week is an annual celebration of the contribution millions of people make across the UK through volunteering. At Cats Protection we have a range of Volunteers' Week resources to help celebrate our fantastic volunteers.

Online tools to help you

When you become a volunteer with Cats Protection you will receive a welcome letter or email with login details to access our Cats Protection portal. This portal is our online system which allows you to access a number of applications to support your volunteering.

Depending on your role you will have access to different online applications, however all volunteers will have access to the below. Your volunteer manager will arrange training on these.

CatNav

CatNav is the Cats Protection information and resource site for volunteers and employees. You can access documents such as policies and procedures as well as read about news stories and events. This is a great way to find out all about Cats Protection.

IT Service Desk

If you have any IT difficulties you can use this icon to contact IT. Alternatively you can email **ITServiceDesk@cats.org.uk** or call **0300 666 0800.**

Learn for Cats

Our Learning & Development team, in conjunction with other teams, have been developing online versions of our training for you to do in your own time and space.

Cat Information Hub

Here you will find all the guidance you need to care for Cats Protection cats, and support to look after yourself as a cat carer.

Volunteer Information System

The Volunteer Information System enables all volunteers to update their own record, including their address, emergency contact details and other information about their volunteering role(s). This system allows Cats Protection to know who our volunteers are and communicate with you as appropriate.

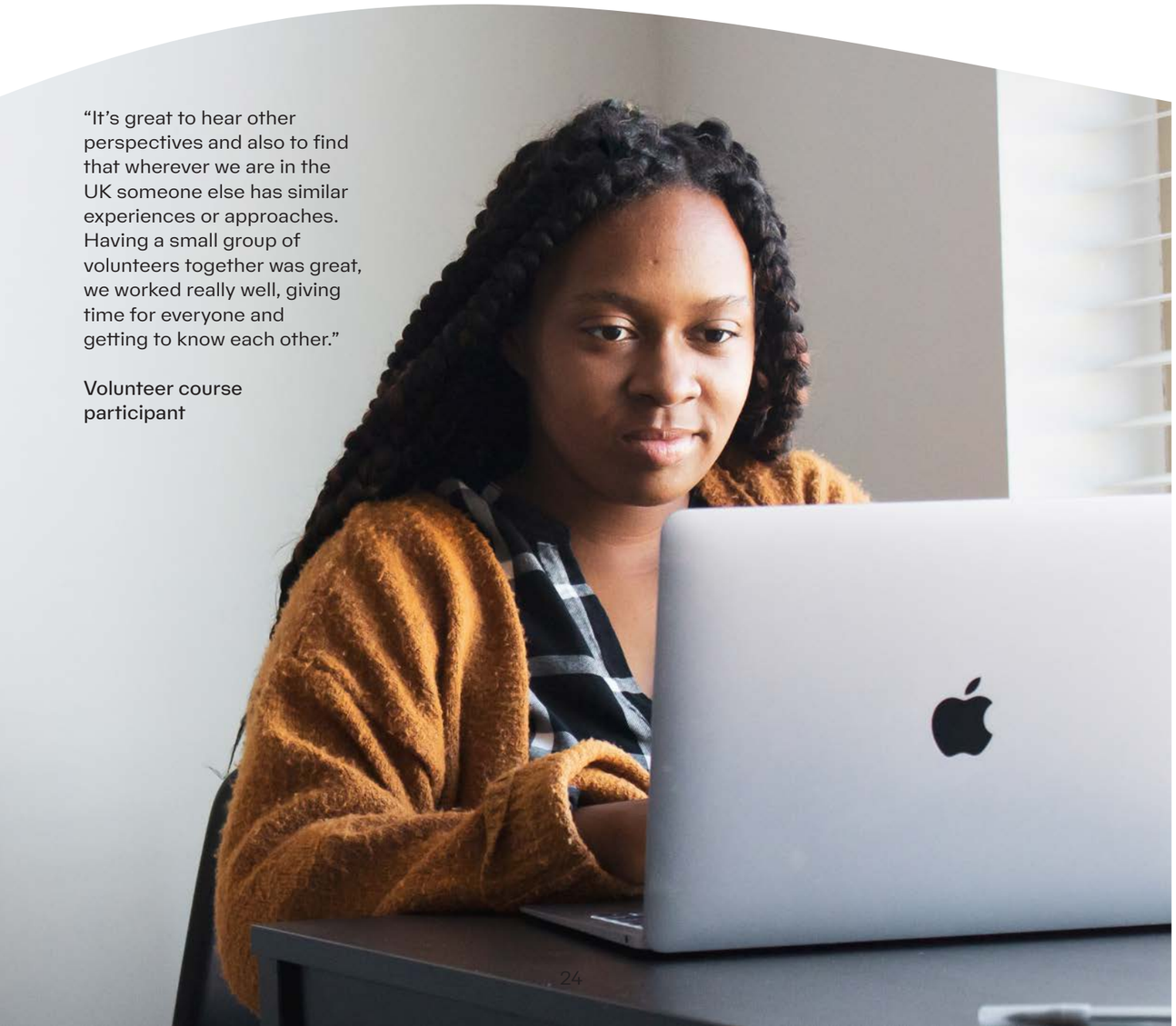
You will be able to select how you would like the organisation and your volunteer manager to be able to contact you. All your details are kept in line with data protection legislation, and you will only be able to access your own record. However, your volunteer manager is able to check and update the records of all volunteers in their team and add new volunteers to the system.

Forum

The Cats Protection Forum aims to promote our charity values, particularly the values concerned with respect, openness and honesty. The Forum is an open and accessible place where users can share good ideas and experiences and ask questions about cat work and the charity as a whole. All users are asked to agree to the rules and policies of the site.

Learning and development

We want all our volunteers to feel safe, confident, supported and comfortable in their own roles and so we have a range of learning and development opportunities which are intended to be fun, accessible and informative.



“It’s great to hear other perspectives and also to find that wherever we are in the UK someone else has similar experiences or approaches. Having a small group of volunteers together was great, we worked really well, giving time for everyone and getting to know each other.”

Volunteer course participant

Key learning for everyone

There are some core pieces of learning we ask everyone to do. These relate to legislative or health and safety responsibilities so it’s really important that everyone completes these.

The majority of these are accessible online. However, if you have a support need which would cause you difficulty please let your volunteer manager know and they will chat with our Learning & Development team for accessible alternatives.

Here is your checklist for the learning we ask everyone to complete.

Name of resource
Welcome to Cats Protection course
General health and safety course
Safeguarding at Cats Protection course
Data protection modules (five bitesize modules)
Lone volunteering infographic

As part of your induction your volunteer manager should highlight other key courses for your role and will chat to you about time frames of when you ideally will complete these. Some of your learning will be simply through shadowing other volunteers or employees and being shown what to do.

We have fantastic cat welfare learning courses available in-person and online, that cover a wide range of topics including:

• interactions, handling and giving medication

• behaviour

• ferals and community work

If you are interested in finding out more about these, chat to your volunteer manager.

Personal development

We also have a range of additional learning and development opportunities to help you develop new skills which are delivered by our friendly facilitators either in-person or through Microsoft Teams.

You can find out more by contacting **learninganddevelopment@cats.org.uk**

Why did you become an education speaker?

“I became an education speaker because I love cats!”

What does your role involve?

“I always go through the talk, even if I know it well, and think about how I can get the information across better, learning from the last time I delivered it and trying to improve. For me it’s always better to speak from what you know and I mention our own cats, for example, so I can emphasise that every cat is an individual. I refer back to our girls often as it allows me to make the things I say clearer and more real. I also talk about the ancestry of cats, because so much of the behaviour of our domestic cats can be traced back to African wildcats.”

Why do you do it?

“I think cats are fascinating creatures, each with their very own personality, and I want to share that love with others while at the same time hopefully improving the lives of these wonderful creatures by helping people understand and respect them.”

Andrew, Education Speaker, South and South West England

Other key policies and guidance to be aware of

Our policies are there to keep our cats, our people and the whole charity running well and effectively. They apply to volunteers and employees, and through training and over time you'll become familiar with many of them, for example:

Data protection

We ensure that personal data obtained about employees, donors, volunteers, supporters, members of the public, Cats Protection members and other stakeholders is held and processed in accordance with data protection legislation.

Confidentiality

Volunteers have a personal responsibility to protect and maintain confidentiality of charity, supplier, customer and client information.

Social media

Volunteers have a responsibility to use social media in a way that gets the most out of online networking and communities while minimising any risks to the reputation of the charity and its people. If volunteering for our Lifeline service, there are additional restrictions that will be discussed with you.

Intellectual property

Both volunteers and the organisation agree that the intellectual property rights of original work produced by volunteers automatically transfers to the organisation.

Computer security, email and internet

Volunteers have a personal responsibility to ensure they do not commit any criminal offences or breach any laws in their use of IT systems.

Whistleblowing

The Whistleblowing Policy is designed to support those who raise serious concerns and helps to ensure that those who do are treated with respect, listened to, and have their concerns taken seriously.

Scan the code for full details on all Cats Protection volunteer policies and guidance.

Five welfare needs

If your role involves caring for cats, you will be asked to become familiar and remain up to date with policies and guidance including on feral cats and kittens, behaviour, neutering and animal welfare legislation.

All animals are protected from harm by law. In addition, animal owners are responsible for ensuring that their pets have all of their needs met.

The five welfare needs are:

1. To have a suitable environment.
2. To have a suitable diet.
3. To be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns.
4. To have the opportunity to be alone.
5. To be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

Thank you!

Diolch!

Tapadh leibh!

to all our volunteers who ‘work as one’ with courage and compassion!

“As Chair of the Trustees I wanted to add my thanks to all the myriad of people who volunteer for Cats Protection. We couldn’t possibly achieve what we do without your help.

“We have a wide range of volunteering roles of all shapes and sizes that contribute to our goals. Be they directly involved with cat care or essential, behind-the-scenes support, we all make a difference to cats and kittens across the UK.

“I’ve personally found volunteering as a Trustee immensely rewarding and I really hope that you will feel the same about your volunteering, not only because we are helping cats and people too, but also because of the benefits to us in terms of our own health and wellbeing.

“On behalf of myself and the rest of the Board, thank you for joining the team!”

Dr Kit Sturgess, Chair of the Trustees

Jargon buster

Although we try not to use acronyms, here's a list to help you understand some of the jargon that you may encounter in your role.

Jargon	Meaning
ARM	Area Retail Manager
ASM	Assistant Shop Manager
Assetlog	A database for recording insurance, MOT, and tax information for branches
BDM	Branch Development Manager
BOF	Branch Operations Framework
BSU	Branch Support Unit
Cashlog	Branch Treasurers' finance system
Cat Guardians	A free service to home people's cats after the owner passes away
CatNav	Cats Protection intranet
Cat-a-Log	System used to log and keep track of cats at branches
Cat-Kind	Kitten Neutering Database. A register of vets who will neuter kittens
CCS	Cat Care Standards
CenVO	Central Veterinary Officer
CEO	Challenge Events Officer
CFO	Community Fundraising Officer
CNA	Community Neutering Assistants
Connect	An advisory body to the Trustees
COSHH	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations
CWA	Cat Welfare Advisors
CWLT	Cat Welfare Learning team
CWLW	Cat Welfare Learning Workshop
CWM	Cat Welfare Manager
CWT	Cat Welfare team
DLH	Domestic longhair
DMH	Domestic medium hair
DPO	Data Protection Officer
DSH	Domestic shorthair

Jargon	Meaning
DSO	Designated Safeguarding Officer. Provides advice and guidance on safeguarding concerns across the whole charity
EdVO	Education Veterinary Officer
EPOS	Electronic Point Of Sale
FAO	Find an Opportunity. Volunteer recruitment system
FAQ	Frequently asked questions
FeLV	Feline leukaemia virus
Find-a-cat	Online tool for finding Cats Protection cats for adoption
Find-an-Op	Find an Opportunity. Volunteer recruitment system
FIP	Feline infectious peritonitis
FIV	Feline immunodeficiency virus
FVO	Field Veterinary Officer
GCCF	The Governing Council of the Cat Fancy
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
IC	Induction Champion
ICAWC	International Companion Animal Welfare Conference
ICC	International Cat Care (Feline Advisory Bureau)
IG	Income generation
IOF	Institute of Fundraising
IT	Information Technology
IT Service Desk	App on the portal for users to log IT issues
Kitten socialisers	Volunteers who help kittens with their social skills and development
L&D	Learning & Development
Lifeline	A fostering service for families fleeing domestic abuse

Jargon	Meaning
LMS	Learner Management System. A data system for learner records
Microsoft Teams	A workspace for real-time collaboration, communication and for conducting online meetings
MOP	Member of the public
MVS	Minimum veterinary standards
NBDM	New Branch Development Manager
NCC	National Cat Centre
Neutering	A surgical procedure carried out under anaesthetic which prevents cats from breeding
Neuterlog	Computer system for tracking neutering vouchers issued by the Neutering team
OLE	Online Learning Event
Ops	The Operations network
PAH	Pets at Home
Paws to Listen	Our grief support service
Portal	Online services for Cats Protection
PP	Petplan
PTS	Put to sleep (euthanased)
PUK	Personal Unlock Key for mobile phones
R&T	Retail & Trading
RCOM	Regional Centre Operations Manager
RFM	Regional Fundraising Manager
RFO	Regional Fundraising Officer
RM	Regional Manager
RRM	Regional Retail Manager
RWA	Rehoming & Welfare Assistant
SLT	Senior Leadership team. Board of Directors reporting to Trustees. Advise and assist the Chief Executive and Trustees

Jargon	Meaning
SM	Shop Manager
SMT	Senior Management Team
Spaying	Spaying is for females, castrating is for males, neutering is for both sexes
STARS	Special Thanks and Recognition Scheme for volunteers
The Library	A database of pre-approved assets to use. Access via the Cats Protection portal
The Studio	A source of editable print and digital templates for use. Access via the Cats Protection portal
TNR	Trap, neuter and return
Trustees	The governing body of Cats Protection
UCN	Understanding Cats' Needs. An online cat welfare course
VBP	Volunteering Best Practice
VBPP	Volunteering Best Practice Partner
VCIP	Volunteer Champions in Practice. Our volunteering quality standard
VCP	Volunteer Champions Programme. A four-day volunteer management course
VID	Volunteer Information Day. Now called Cat Welfare Learning Workshop
VIS	Volunteer Information System
VOL	Volunteer
VPN	Virtual Private Network. Remote workers are linked to the IT systems using this
VTL	Volunteer Team Leaders. Based in cat centres

Notes

Notes

Helpful contacts

Your first point of contact for general support in your volunteering will be your volunteer manager, however the following numbers may also be useful.

The Branch Support Unit are available to help branches and centres with any queries they have, whether it is something the team can deal with directly or they can ask another department to help with. To contact the team please call: Freephone **08080 0191 919** 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday or email **bsu@cats.org.uk**

To raise a **safeguarding concern** you can call **01825 741 248** or email **safeguarding@cats.org.uk** In an emergency you should call 999.

The **Volunteer Assistance Programme** is a free and confidential support offer available to our volunteers 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. They can be reached on the freephone number **0800 030 5182**. Please say that you are a Cats Protection volunteer when you speak with them.

If you have any **IT** difficulties please contact IT via email **ITServiceDesk@cats.org.uk** or call **0300 666 0800**

The **Safety, Health & Environment team** is there to ensure the safety of all employees and volunteers so that they can carry out their Cats Protection role and finish the day as healthy as they were at the start. The team can be contacted on **she@cats.org.uk**

If you have a general query relating to any aspect of Cats Protection and its work please contact the **Contact Centre** on **03000 12 12 12** or visit our website **cats.org.uk**

If you are grieving the loss of your cat please contact **Paws to Listen** from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday on **0800 024 94 94** or email **pawstolisten@cats.org.uk**

The **Information Governance team** provide support and advice for all things data protection. Please email **dataprotection@cats.org.uk** For any queries regarding disposal or retaining of electronic or paper files, you can contact our Records Management Officer via **recordsmanagement@cats.org.uk**

The **Volunteering** team offer advice and support on all areas of volunteering and volunteer management, from recruitment and selection to thanking and recognition. The team can be contacted on **volunteering@cats.org.uk**

cats.org.uk

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recycle