

CAT
SMART


CAT SMART PILOT PROJECT

QUARTER 4 REPORT: June – August 2018



Project background

Our Quarter 4 report brings to a close the first year of our Cat Smart pilot project in Sheffield.

This year we have met some incredible people: from RSPCA inspectors working on the frontline; individuals volunteering in their communities; and groups of people collectively working across the city; to vets, working in both charity and private practice. All these people are doing everything they can to lend a hand to the Cat Smart scheme, in a bid to increase the number of owned cats being neutered and microchipped and share the benefits of these with cats and their owners.

Outreach and engagement

Outreach and engagement are always easier in the summer months due to the array of activities available out in communities, so it's been an extremely busy summer. This has of course been helped along by the fantastic weather we've had and the ongoing support from a brilliantly dedicated team of volunteers.

Alongside community events, we have continued to plan and deliver pop-up practices and were out in force with our partners from 10–18 August at Crystal Peaks Shopping Centre. The manager kindly donated the use of one of the shopping centre's units to us for a pop-up neutering clinic on Saturday 18 June, and with the support of partners we were able to promote the scheme, our individual charities, and raise some much-needed funds on the first floor of the centre.

The Springfield Vets Practice was also on hand, led by Andrea Hurrell and Tracey Cousins, to run another pop-up. With their team, they neutered another 23 cats.

The event was predominantly aimed at raising awareness and drawing attention to the issue of cat population in an area with higher than average footfall, but it took an unexpected turn when a lovely little black cat was brought in to us by a member of the public. He had been feeding her for several weeks after she arrived on his doorstep.

Upon scanning the little stray cat, Paula Sorby from RSPCA Sheffield Animal Centre found that she did, in fact, have a name – Bella – and an owner!

Julie Dyett, Bella's owner who lives in Sheffield, said: "She had gone missing on 22 July, the day after I came back from holiday. We looked everywhere and just when we had given up hope, the call came right out of the blue from Cat Smart.

"A man and his wife had been feeding her, which I'm really grateful for. They have cats of their own and she just kept turning up for food. It worked out so well, him taking her to the event, and as she is microchipped they were able to contact me and I collected her that same afternoon.



Engaged with

more than **360**
people between
1 June and
31 August



264
cats neutered this
quarter **115** male
149 female

Up to

9,972

prevented litters



Total number of
cats neutered by
Cat Smart

1,054



"Bella has recently moved in with me, as she used to live with my daughter. Where she was found was about halfway back to her old house, so I think she had got confused and was trying to make her way back.

"She was a bit stressed but otherwise she's fine. She doesn't have any injuries or anything like that, she just looks a bit thin. I'm keeping her indoors for now to give her time to settle in."

This heartwarming happy ending really shows just how important microchipping is, to help ensure that if your cat is lost, stolen or injured they can be reunited with you.

RSPCA figures show that nine out of 10 cats brought into our national centres last year were not microchipped.

Our outreach and engagement, combined with our activities on Facebook, have also helped us to neuter 264 cats this quarter.

Over the winter months, you are likely to see us out and about on a street near you as we embark on the next phase of our project, going door to door, starting in the Arbourthorne area of S2. Look out for our van and if you see us – cats or no cats – come and say hello!

Meet Shauna

I started volunteering with a local site that helped reunite lost and found animals. As the role progressed I became the administrator, which opened my eyes to how big a problem Sheffield had with lost or stray animals.

I was asked to help rescue some feral kittens who had nowhere to go. Since then I've helped to trap, neuter and return a good number of feral cats, making sure they have shelter and a regular food source. Many cats and kittens have lived in my home until a new home has been found or one of the lovely rescue centres stepped forward and offered space.



Already working closely with the RSPCA and its inspectorate team, when I heard about Cat Smart I just knew I needed to be involved and help spread the word. Every time a lost cat is posted on our group or we are contacted to help we give the Cat Smart link. We advise it's best to have the cat neutered and explain to people the benefits of having their pets spayed or 'snipped'. I attend regular meetings to see how I can help promote Cat Smart on top of what we are already doing, and to see which areas are in most need, to lower the cat population. I volunteer at as many of the events Cat Smart run as I can to promote the scheme and raise awareness with people.

I'm so pleased to see how many people have actually taken their cats to be neutered since Cat Smart began and that there are so many people coming together to make a huge difference.

Shauna



All our Cat Smart volunteering roles are currently taken, however, if you would like more information on our volunteering strategy or to register an interest in the future, please email: carrie.stones@rspca.org.uk

Aside from Cat Smart, there are a number of schemes occurring across the RSPCA, focussing in on people as individuals and providing support at a time and in the place, it is needed, and at the Greater Manchester Animal Hospital, they are providing guidance and support to multicat households right in their own homes.

Greater Manchester Animal Hospital – Tackling Cat Hoarding

RSPCA receives more than a thousand calls about animal hoarding every year.

The RSPCA runs a unique scheme from its Greater Manchester Animal Hospital in Salford helping those who are unable to cope when the number of animals they own spirals out of control.

The animal welfare charity has noticed a trend of calls relating to animal hoarding to its national call centre - rising from 922 in 2016 to 1,392 in 2017 and 1,085 already this year (correct as of 26/09).

Kayleigh Hill, a vet at the hospital, has been spearheading a scheme to help those hoarding animals since November 2015. So far she and her team have visited 60 houses in the area, seen more than 1,098 cats and neutered 267 females and 165 males.

Across those 60 houses, 481 litters had been produced – the average litter produces four cats so potentially that's 1,924 kittens in need of homes.

On average each household Kayleigh visited had 19 cats but a handful has more than 50 and some as many as 60. On average there is a 30 per cent reduction in the number of cats per household.

Kayleigh said: "What we want to go through this scheme is to go into people's homes and help them. I'm not interested in how many cats a person owns but rather how well they are able to cope and to look after them.

"We aren't punishing people, we are working with them to reduce their animals to a number that is manageable for them. We take welfare scores of the cats each visit and what we are finding is that their scores are improving and are staying at that improved level.

"One message that we do always try to get out there is how important it is to neuter your pets when you take on an animal. Cats can be neutered from four months of age to prevent unwanted litters."

Celine Smith lives near to the hospital in Manchester. She had 26 cats when she first came into contact with Kayleigh in October 2016 and now has eight cats.

Many of the cats that ended up in Celine's care were unwanted pets or strays people left with her as they knew she wouldn't turn them away, however it became too much for her to cope with.

Celine said: "Kayleigh has helped me out so much, I was feeling very stressed at one point trying to care for so many cats and to get them all the treatment they needed.

"It's much more manageable now, I feel better, and the most important thing is the cats are now in loving homes where they can get the attention and love they deserve.

"I am so grateful to Kayleigh for helping me to sort everything out, the stress has gone and I have the perfect number of cats for me."

RSPCA cat welfare expert Sam Watson added: "All cats are unique individuals, but most prefer to live a solitary life.

Living in close proximity to other cats can cause them stress, which, as well as causing them to feel unhappy, can lead to ill health. It can be challenging, time-consuming and expensive to take care of many cats in one household."

To help the RSPCA to continue to rescue, rehabilitate and rehome animals in desperate need of care please visit www.rspca.org.uk/give.

All the cats available for rehoming from the RSPCA can be viewed online.

Kayleigh



Kindness for cats

This Cats Protection petition is simply asking for your help to create a world where every cat is treated with kindness. To show your support, simply follow the link and make your pledge by signing the petition at:

<https://www.thepetitionsite.com/en-gb/takeaction/673/078/465/>

Your voice

Would you like the chance to have your say on cat welfare?

To support Cat Smart and our partners in campaigns designed to help improve cat welfare, each quarter we will share opportunities to get your voice heard on cat welfare-related issues.



Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

Telephone: 0300 1234 999 www.rspca.org.uk

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