

Cat microchipping to be made mandatory

- 99% of people support compulsory microchipping for cats according to recent Government consultation
- Owners will be required to microchip their cats by the time they reach 20 weeks of age
- Microchipping cats will help reunite thousands of lost or stray pets every year

Lost or stray pet cats are more likely to be reunited with their owners and returned home safely under new pet microchipping rules announced by the Government today.

Under the new plans, all keepers must ensure their pet is microchipped before they reach the age of 20 weeks and their contact details stored and kept up to date in a pet microchipping database. Owners found not to have microchipped their cat will have 21 days to have one implanted, or may face a fine of up to £500.

The new microchipping rules follow a [Government call for evidence and consultation](#) on the issue in which 99% of respondents expressed support for the measure.

The introduction of compulsory cat microchipping was a key manifesto commitment and the Government pledged to introduce it under its flagship [Action Plan for Animal Welfare](#).

There are over 10.8 million pet cats in the UK, with as many as 2.8 million unchipped, meaning that it would be very difficult to reunite them with their owner if they get lost or stolen. Eight out of 10 stray cats coming into Cats Protection's centres are not microchipped.

The simple procedure involves inserting a small chip with a unique serial number under a cat's skin. This number can be read by a scanner and checked against a microchip database to help reunite lost pets quicker with their registered keeper, saving heartache and concern.

Animal Welfare Minister Lord Goldsmith said:

Cats are much-loved parts of our families and making sure that they're microchipped is the best possible way of making sure that you are reunited with them if they are ever lost or stolen.

These new rules will help protect millions of cats across the country and will be brought in alongside a range of other protections we are introducing under our Action Plan for Animal Welfare.

Cats Protection's Head of Advocacy & Government Relations Jacqui Cuff said:

As the UK's leading cat charity, we have been at the forefront of the campaign for compulsory microchipping of pet cats. Every day, we see how important microchipping is for cats and for the people who love them – whether it's reuniting a lost cat with their owner, identifying an injured cat, or helping to ensure an owner can be informed in the sad event that their cat has been hit and killed by a car.

Microchipping is by far the most effective and quickest way of identifying lost cats and can help ease the pressure on rescue charities like Cats Protection. Without a microchip, a lost cat will most likely end up being rehomed to a new home as there is often no trace of their original owner.

Earlier this year the Government also worked closely with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons to introduce new guidance which requires vets to scan the microchips of healthy dogs to help ensure they are not put down unnecessarily. In addition, the Government is also carrying out a review of the regulations on dog microchipping and the related microchipping database systems to consider whether improvements can be made.

The new cat microchipping rules will be implemented once this review has completed to ensure that any changes to the operation of the microchipping regime are brought in at the same time as the new microchipping rules for cats.

The commitment to microchipping is part of a wider Government effort to build on our existing world-leading standards and follows a number of recent announcements aimed at improving companion animal welfare, including [tackling puppy smuggling](#) in the [Animal Welfare \(Kept Animals\) Bill](#) and introducing a [new pet abduction offence](#) to crack down on theft.

Further Information:

- Statistics available in Cats Protection's Cats and Their Stats Report, October 2021.