



Bath
Cats & Dogs
Home

Impact Report 2025



Transforming Lives

Events of recent years, such as the COVID pandemic, poor breeding practices and the cost-of-living crisis, have all contributed to the current animal welfare crisis.

At Bath Cats & Dogs Home, we believe every cat and dog should have a healthy life and a happy home, and we remain committed to strengthening the impact of our rescue centre alongside our work to support owners in our communities.

Many of the dogs and cats coming into our rescue centre have complex medical and behavioural needs, requiring lengthy rehabilitation, but we ensure they receive the best care possible, while we find them a loving home.

Thanks to our adopters, supporters, team, volunteers, fostering network and partners, we've made significant strides over the last year. And with exciting plans to expand our operations in 2026 (see page 16), we will transform the lives of even more neglected and abandoned pets.

Image: Pip was a stray dog with a shy nature. She has blossomed in confidence since being adopted, her owners told us "She has claimed the settee and also our hearts."

The National Picture

The issues that shaped 2025

Dog ownership has risen to record levels.

The estimated population of dogs is now at its highest ever level, with 11.1 million dogs in the UK, according to the 2025 PDSA Animal Wellbeing Mini Report. This is fueling the surge in abandoned dogs arriving at animal centres across the nation.

Cat owners are getting younger and more affluent, with many choosing to breed their pets.

For the first time, over half of cats acquired in the last 12 months are pedigrees (51%) according to Cats Protection's 2025 report. This is being driven by younger, more affluent owners, with 49% of 18 to 34-year-old cat owners choosing to buy a pedigree cat. However, neutering numbers have fallen to 82% (down from 88% in 2020) as many of these new owners want their cats to have kittens.

"Support from the veterinary practice has never been more critical in the new landscape of cat breeding and selling, to ensure that cats are bred responsibly and with welfare

prioritised," says Sarah Elliott, Central Veterinary Officer, Cats Protection.

The public is witnessing more animal cruelty year on year.

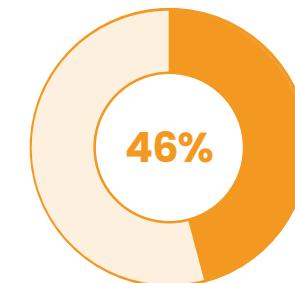
The number of adults who have witnessed animal cruelty in the past 12 months is at an all-time high at 42%, according to the 2025 RSPCA Kindness Report. Figures are higher among younger people, with 55% of 18–24-year-olds and 60% of 16–17-year-olds having witnessed animal cruelty. Nearly one-third (30%) of people have witnessed animal cruelty online (including social media), with figures higher among younger age categories (46% of 18–24-year-olds).

Pet owners continue to be concerned about costs, with a particular focus on vet bills.

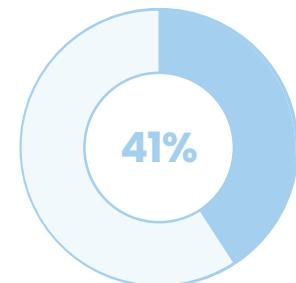
Over two-fifths of pet owners said it is more expensive than expected to care for their animals in the 2025 PDSA Animal Wellbeing Mini Report. Nearly all respondents thought the cost of owning a pet has increased, with 51% worried about being able to afford the cost of veterinary care.

Many say owning a pet is more expensive than expected, and owners near-unanimously think costs have increased

Two-fifths or more say owning a pet is more expensive than they expected. This has risen from 2023, when a third said the same.

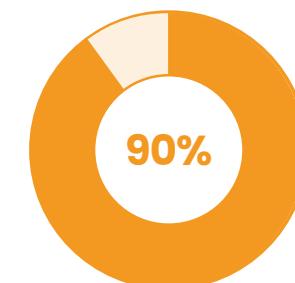


Dog owners

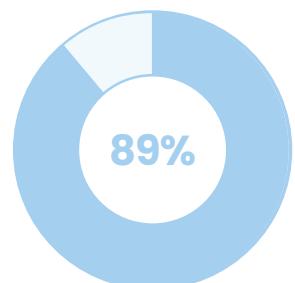


Cat owners

Nearly all think the **cost of owning a pet** has increased, with larger proportions agreeing than in 2023



Dog owners



Cat owners

The National Picture

The new laws improving the rights of pet owners and animal welfare

The Renter's Rights Act

This new act, which received royal ascent in October 2025 and will be effective from 1 May 2026, bans blanket "no pets" clauses. This allows tenants to ask for permission to live with pets, with written responses required within 28 days. Landlords can only refuse with good reason (e.g. unsuitable property size or lease restrictions) and can ask for an extra deposit (within legal caps) or pet insurance, but must respond in writing, making it easier for responsible pet owners to find homes.

The Competition and Markets Authority's (CMA) investigation into vet care

The CMA's investigation into the UK's £6.3 billion veterinary services market has provisionally decided that a package of 21 measures is required to provide consumers with greater choice and savings. They found that average vet prices across the market rose by 63% between 2016 and 2023, and pet owners pay 16.6% more on average at large vet groups than at independent vets.

The recommendations include:

- Requiring vet businesses to publish comprehensive price lists
- Making it easier for pet owners to access cheaper medicines online
- Requiring vets to give pet owners clear price information when organising a treatment or cremation.

The CMA's final decision will be published by March 2026, with some measures expected to come into force before the end of 2026.

The Animal Welfare (Import of Dogs, Cats and Ferrets) Act

This is a UK law designed to stop puppy smuggling and low-welfare imports by cracking down on the illegal pet trade. The law establishes new rules for pet travel and bans the import of vulnerable animals like young puppies, heavily pregnant animals or mutilated pets (e.g. dogs with cropped ears or docked tails and cats that have been declawed), closing loopholes to protect animal welfare.



Local Challenges

The key issues we're tackling at Bath Cats & Dogs Home.



Average length of stay (days)



Abandoned puppies and kittens

In 2025, 34% of the cats and 14% of the dogs we cared for were under 6 months old. In total, we rescued 45 puppies and 120 kittens, with peak admissions in May, June, July and October. These numbers include the puppies and kittens of dogs and cats that were pregnant when admitted (see Valerie's story on page 9) and those that arrived with litters, or alone.

Complex issues and longer stays

The average length of stay in 2025 was 62 days for cats and 71 days for dogs, reflecting the time required to rehabilitate animals arriving with complex behavioural and medical needs. To speed up this process, we are working with our fostering network to help us assess and improve behaviour. We're also constantly improving the handover support for adopters so they can continue the work in a more relaxing home environment, and we're always looking for adopters willing to take on adult rescue pets.

An increase in the number of big dogs

During 2025, we saw a 33% increase in the number of big dogs arriving at the centre. These include breeds such as German and Belgian shepherds, cane corso, akita, malamute, American bulldog, husky and rottweilers. Similar increases have been reported by Battersea and the RSPCA, who have found it takes seven times longer to find a home for a big dog than a small one.

Hare coursing

Hare coursing continues to be a prevalent criminal activity in our region, particularly around Salisbury Plain, which is reflected in the number of lurchers arriving at the centre. In total, we rescued 47 lost or abandoned lurchers during 2025, which was significantly more than any other dog breed.

During 2025, we saw a 33% increase in the number of big dogs arriving at the centre

Our Impact

Expert Care



Every day, we take in abandoned and neglected cats and dogs in need of a **safe place to stay** and **medical treatment**. Our expert team prepare them for a healthy and happy life, and **matches them to adopters** keen to give a pet a second chance.

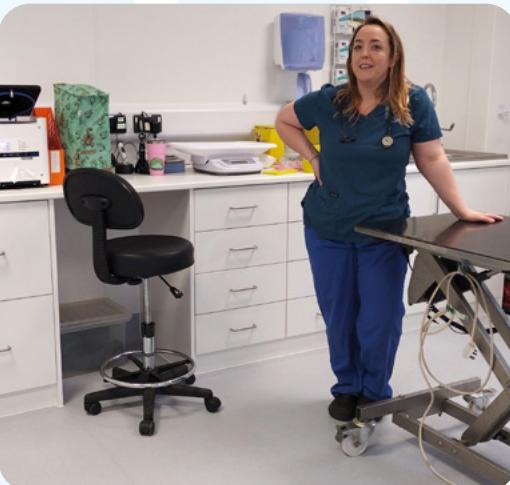
After accepting a new animal at the centre, we give **every cat and dog a vet check-up** and a behaviour assessment, and create a **personalised care plan** for their journey towards adoption.

Post-adoption, we continue to provide advice to every adopter, and even **medical or behavioural care** if their new cat or dog needs extra support to settle into their new home.

Our Impact – Expert Care

2025 Highlights

- Our behaviour team see every animal that arrives (that's over 700 cats and dogs a year) and creates a plan to prepare them for adoption. Around 70% of dogs and 50% of cats get extra confidence-building time with the team. Adopters are also given notes and tips, so they know how to help their pet settle in.
- Our animal care team are always learning and improving too. They had training on welfare in kennels from Clinical Behaviourist Sezan Öz, who specialises in positive dog behaviour modification for issues like anxiety, aggression and reactivity.
- Our refurbished vet suite, pictured below with Head Vet Michaela opened at the beginning of 2025. It has made a huge difference to our vet team with more storage, more equipment, separate recovery rooms for the cats and dogs and separate vet and nurse rooms, meaning twice as much work can be done. We have also tripled our outreach appointments to see external clients as a result.



An award-winning year

- RSPCA Paw Print **Gold awards** for both strays and kennelling
- MEA Construction Consultants won the **Civic and Community award** at the 2025 Bath Property Awards for their work on the **Bath Cats and Dogs Home redevelopment project**
- **Bath Echo Community Awards** – Charity of the Year

Alfred's Story

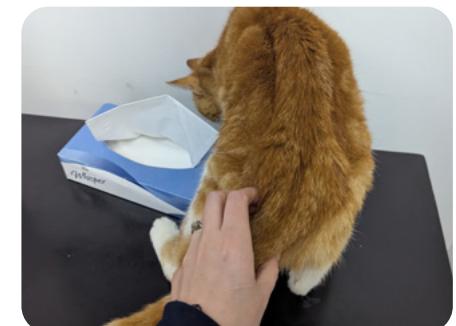
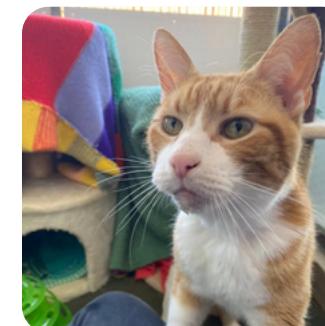
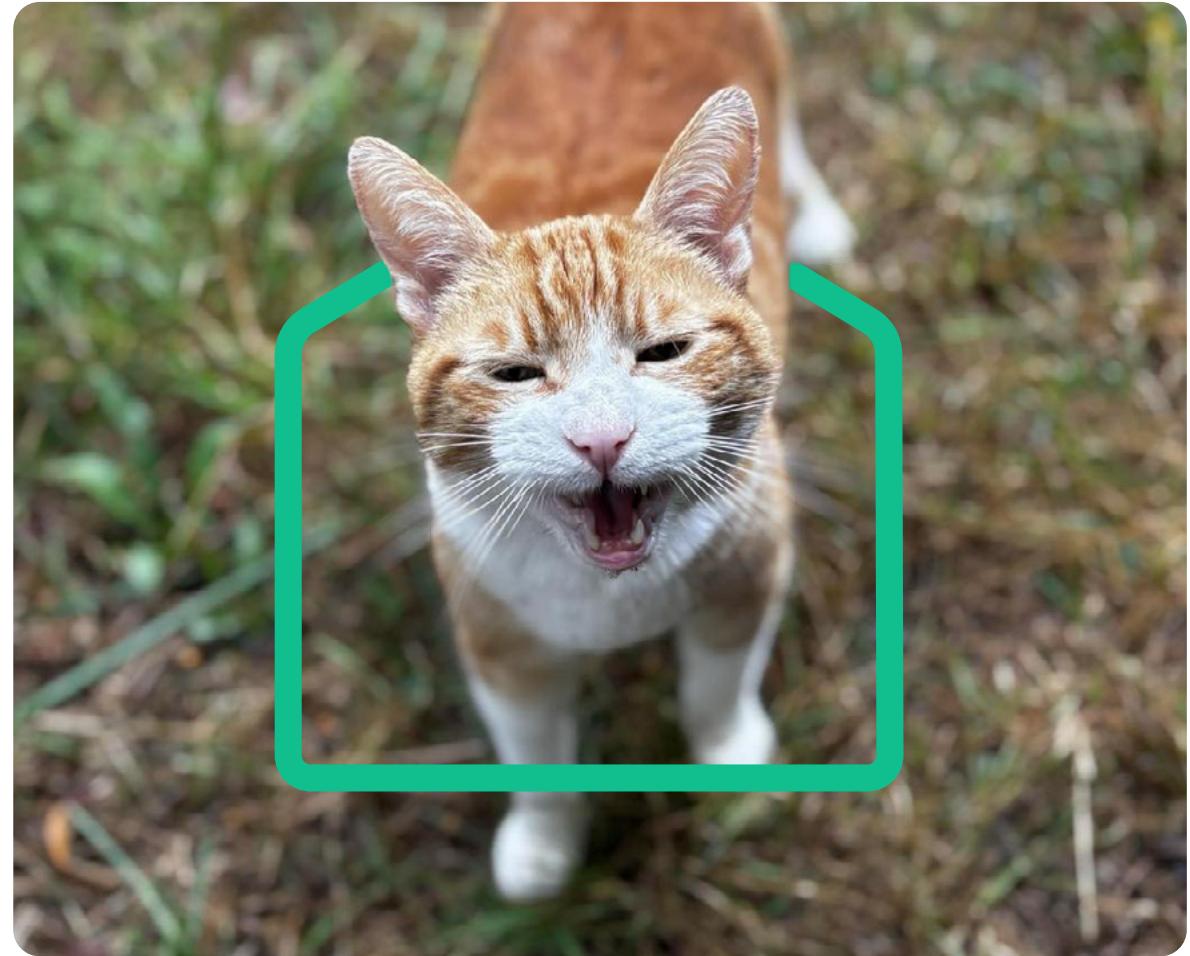
When Alfred arrived in April after being seized from his owner by the police, he was a neglected 8-year-old cat, with fleas, very poor teeth and an intestine infection. He was also chronically underweight, weighing just 2.7kg (the ideal weight is around 4.5kg), with a body score of 1/9.

First treated at the RSPCA clinic at Merthyr Tydfil, where he had to feed little and often, he was then transferred to Bath Cats & Dogs Home before his case went to court.

Once he was signed over to us in October, we were able to give him much-needed dental treatment, along with a course of steroids and other medication to nurse him back to health.

Following extensive treatment, Alfred is happy, healthy (his weight is now back to 4.3kg) and ready to be adopted.

"Alfred has been a real character," says Senior Animal Carer Ashleigh. "He will shout at you as you pass for attention and take all the fuss you can give him. He eats his medication well and has been a gent to all our volunteers and the team – a perfect guest."





Valerie's Story

Found tied to a railing, starving and heavily pregnant, Valerie was barely surviving. But everything changed when she was rescued and brought to us. Nine days later, she gave birth to 11 puppies.

That many puppies would be demanding for any mother, but Valerie was so malnourished that she couldn't produce enough milk to feed her growing puppies.

Luckily, she had our staff and trained fosterers to help her, with seven of the puppies needing to be hand-reared to give them the best chance of survival.

Bottle feeding and cleaning the puppies every 2 hours, including through the night, we anxiously waited to see how many puppies would make it. Six weeks later, all 11 puppies had developed healthily, which was a huge achievement for such a large litter. Happily, we soon found them all homes, resulting in 11 adoptions.

Throughout this period, we also cared for Valerie, building up her strength and recovery until she was also ready to be adopted in December.

Speaking shortly after welcoming Valerie into their home, her delighted adopters said, "Her playful side is really coming out. She has had some zoomies around the house and enjoyed a snuffle ball today. We are really enjoying having Valerie with us and have fallen in love with her already!"

Our Impact

Transforming Lives

Offering everything from rescue, rehabilitation and rehoming to advice and support, Bath Cats & Dogs Home exists to positively transform the lives of pets and their owners in our communities.

We take in cats and dogs from the public, RSPCA inspectors, the police and dog wardens covering Bath, north east Somerset and Wiltshire. We reunite stray animals with their owners and manage the adoption of rescue pets to loving new homes across the south-west.

We are constantly adapting and innovating our ways of working to achieve the best outcomes for the dogs and cats in our care by improving our facilities, developing our people and educating owners. We are also growing our foster care programme and working with our adopter network to increase our efficiency and refine our approach.

Image: Frankie the beagle was handed over after a change in his owner's circumstances. He has completed the family with his new owners Ash and Pru, taking centre stage in their engagement photos!



Our Impact

Transforming Lives

2025 Highlights

- In 2025, we **rehomed 178 dogs** and **295 cats**.
- We took in **230 stray dogs, reuniting 94 with their owners** – this is 41%, which is a higher percentage than last year so a hopeful sign that **abandonments are dropping**.
- This year has seen us expand our fostering network, **with 52 fosterers** providing temporary care for dogs and cats in their homes. In 2025, **92 cats** and **60 dogs** were placed on foster, and **over 300 animals have been fostered** since the programme was first launched in 2023.
- All our fosterers completed a **practical refresher course** on dog and cat training during the summer, with plans for **more courses** in the year ahead.



"I'm very proud of all the fostering department has achieved in 2025. It's been great to see the fosterers develop their skills and provide love, support, socialisation, and ongoing training for our animals in a home environment."

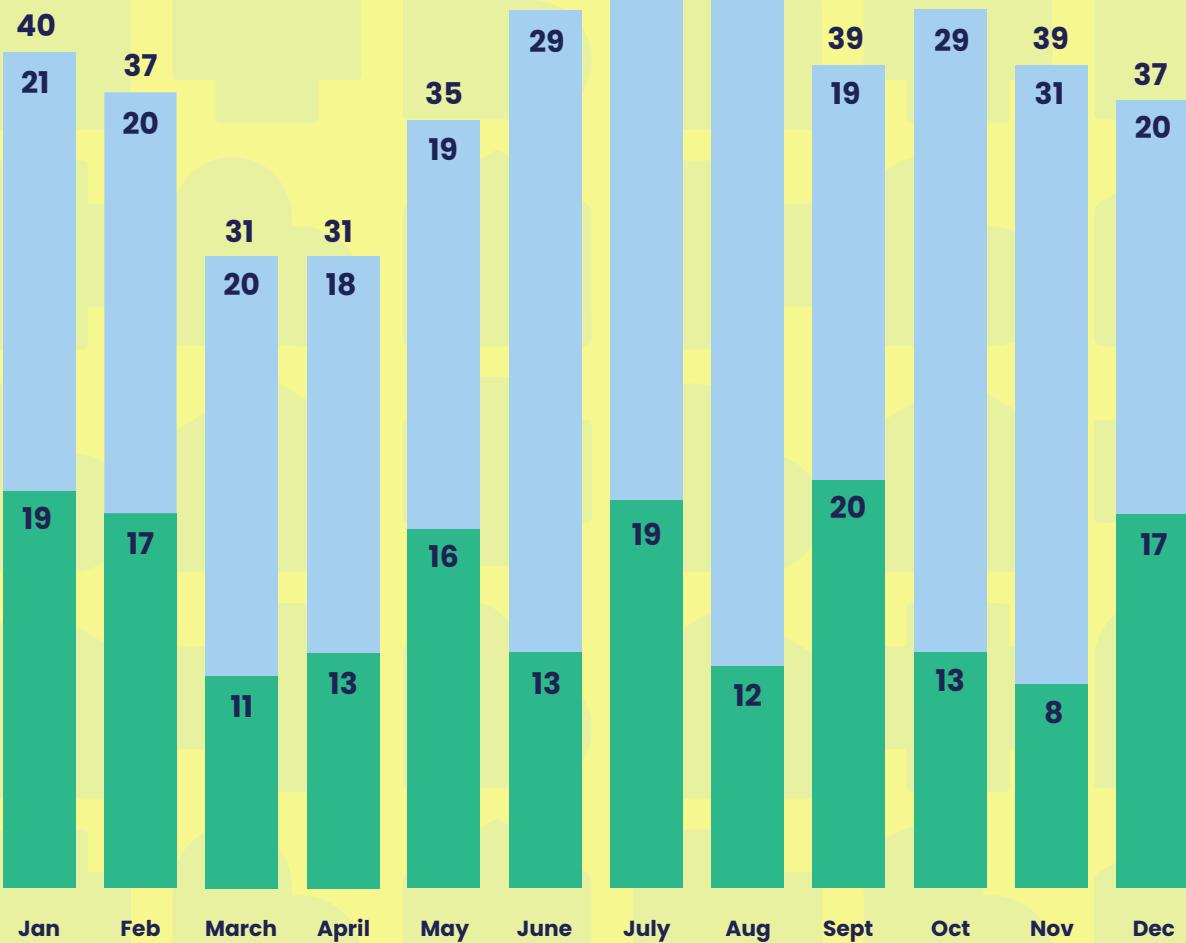
Emma, Foster Co-ordinator

Our Impact

Transforming Lives

No. of adopted dogs & cats in 2025

- No. of cats adopted
- No. of dogs adopted
- Monthly total



Overall Total

178 dogs
295 cats

Combined
473

Tiptoe's Story

When Tiptoe first arrived at Bath Cats & Dogs Home late one evening, she was so poorly that we thought she would die overnight. She had been living as a stray in the bin shed of a block of flats, was very underweight at 2.9kg (her ideal weight is 3.5kg) and was suffering from severe dermatitis and dental disease.

To treat her dermatitis, she had to wear two buster collars to stop her scratching, and our vets put her on a long course of steroids and antibiotics. Once she had returned to a healthy weight, she then underwent an anaesthetic and had several teeth extracted and her remaining teeth cleaned.

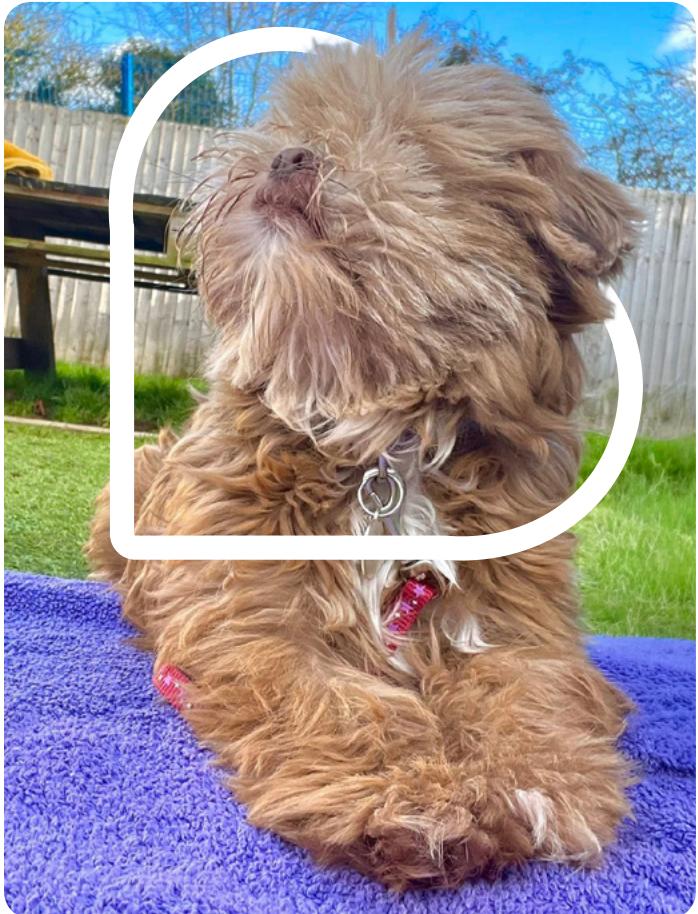
As we knew it would be an extended stay in the cattery, it was important that she spent time out of her space, and she particularly enjoyed spending time in the office and taking naps in the sunshine in our cat garden during the spring.

We're pleased to say that we found Tiptoe a new home in early July and has continued to make progress under the care of her adopted family, who said, "Little Tiptoe, or 'Tippers', is doing very well indeed and is a completely transformed cat. Her dermatitis has almost

completely cleared up, she's less fussy with her food and has put on plenty of weight. Her fur is thicker and softer, her back legs work better, she's vomiting less, playing more and is super friendly with us. She's also more friendly with other people and visitors. The adoption process was great, and Tiptoe was very well matched to us by your team. Thank you for all the work you do"

"The adoption process was great, and Tiptoe was very well matched to us by your team. Thank you for all the work you do"





Frost's Story

Frost is a sensitive, sweet-natured 4-year-old Shih Tzu that was rescued from a home with over 100 dogs. Although medically fine, she was very nervous and hadn't been lead-trained, causing her to panic when she felt any pressure on her collar. Because of her background, we had to assume she had never been outside other than in a garden.

We placed her with a foster family with older children, other dogs and visiting dogs to see how she responded to being in a home. While there, she would only eat away from the other dogs and would startle at any sudden noises, regardless of where they came from. However, this started to improve after a month.

Once bonded, Frost was incredibly affectionate and formed a deep, rewarding connection with her person; she loved to be close, cuddling on laps or lying by their feet, and would happily follow them around the home like a little shadow.

On a break back into kennels, our behaviour team taught her to wear a harness, and she was put on medication to help with her anxiety.

It was clear she needed a calm, understanding home where she could continue to grow in confidence at her own pace. Fortunately, we managed to find the perfect home, and she moved in with her adoptive owner in December, where her rehabilitation continues in a safe, calm and loving environment.

On a break back into kennels, our behaviour team taught her to wear a harness, and she was put on medication to help with her anxiety.

Our Impact

Community Support

If pets are wanted and cared for, we help them to remain in homes rather than coming into the rescue centre. To support vulnerable owners or those on low incomes, we have a raft of initiatives.

These initiatives include our food bank and our Emergency Vet Fee Assistance to ensure the welfare of pets of those on low incomes, along with the Together Project, which provides free veterinary care to pets of people at risk of homelessness.

“In 2025, our outreach projects supported pets and their owners within our local community in a huge way. We have stepped in to help people when facing unexpected vet bills and contributed towards this cost so that their pets receive the care they need and can stay at home where they are safe and loved.”

Hayley, Outreach Manager

2025 Highlights

Foodbank

- In 2025, we donated 933kg of cat food, which is equivalent to 4,443 cat meals and 1,418kg of dog food, equivalent to 4,738 dog meals.
- In recognition of our work supporting local food banks, we have received three £600 grants from the RSPCA to buy food for our food bank partners.

Emergency Vet Fee Assistance

- In 2025, we assisted 47 local pet owners with unexpected vet costs, ranging from emergency dental treatment to lump removals and entropion surgery to correct an eyelid that turns in or turns out.

Together Project

- In 2025, the voluntary vets and vet nurses from Bath Vets treated 80 animals on-site or across our 12 clinics and performed five operations.
- Our Together Project volunteer team, plus two of our office volunteers, Stuart and Lindie, were selected as finalists in the Team Collaboration category at the RSPCA Impact Awards.

Looking Ahead

What we're looking forward to in 2026

We're getting bigger and stronger

Following our planned merger with RSPCA North Somerset (Brent Knoll), we'll be a stronger and more sustainable charity, working across a larger area. We'll be taking all that we have learnt and developed, such as our outreach services, out into North Somerset, and both centres will continue to transform the lives of cats, dogs and small pets.

A new and improved adoption process

During 2025, we completed a customer survey and inter-team collaborations to identify ways to improve our adoption service. In 2026, we'll be implementing those improvements to make it more straightforward and supportive to adopt, encourage more first-time adopters to give a pet a second chance at love and support experienced owners with our more challenging cases.

More courses for fosterers

In 2026, we want to grow and support our incredible fostering network, offering more training courses for those who choose to join us. The ultimate goal is to get as many animals as we can on foster, especially those that are struggling in the kennels/cattery environment and those that are young or elderly, so they have more one-on-one care.





Bath Cats and Dogs Home is part of the RSPCA network
and works closely with RSPCA Inspectors to care for animals
where there are immediate concerns for their welfare.

RSPCA.

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