



GENERAL ELECTION 2019 MANIFESTO

A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR OUR DOGS AND CATS



FOREWORD

As a nation of animal lovers, the UK public are passionate about the welfare of dogs and cats. There has been significant progress since the 2017 General Election in improving the law for dogs and cats, yet there is still much to do. Recent improvements to the welfare of dogs and cats include:

- The introduction of a Bill to increase the maximum sentence for animal cruelty from six months to five years imprisonment for the worst cases of animal cruelty. The catalyst for this was the Battersea campaign which launched in February 2017, receiving widespread support from the public and from across Parliament. Regrettably, the Bill failed to complete its passage through Parliament before the Election and **has to be reintroduced**.
- The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 updated the licensing regime around dog breeding, the sale of pets, providing boarding for cats or dogs and day care for dogs.
- Furthermore, these Regulations were amended in July this year to ban third party sales of puppies and kittens under six months of age. This means that only licensed breeders and rescue centres will be able to sell or rehome puppies and kittens, and those unscrupulous dealers and their practices will become illegal from 6th April 2020.

Whilst there has been much to celebrate, there is still much more work to be done. We hope that the new Government and Members of Parliament will consider taking further action on the 12 issues outlined within this Manifesto, and that we can count on your support to improve the welfare of dogs and cats across the UK.

About Battersea Dogs & Cats Home

Established in 1860 to care for London's abandoned animals, and now works to help dogs and cats beyond our gates and across the UK, Battersea Dogs & Cats Home aims to never turn away a dog or

cat in need of help. We reunite lost dogs and cats with their owners; when we can't do this, we care for them until new owners can be found. We accept any breed of dog or cat, at any age, including those with serious medical and behavioural problems. There is no time limit on how long an animal stays with us until the perfect new owners are found.

Battersea has been at the heart of companion animal welfare for over 150 years. From our humble beginnings in a stable yard in Holloway, Battersea is now a world-renowned animal welfare charity which cares for thousands of animals each year, delivers cutting edge veterinary care and trains welfare professionals across the world through our Academy. We use our voice to influence the issues which affect dogs, cats and the vital work we do. Our Battersea Manifesto sets out 12 of the key issues in animal welfare which will come before MPs elected in 2019.

However, at Battersea and across the animal welfare sector, we were extremely disappointed that the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill did not complete its passage through Parliament before the Election. **Following our campaign to increase the maximum sentence for the worst cases of animal cruelty offences since February 2017, we hope that this Bill will be laid again before Parliament soon.**



Claire Horton CEO, Battersea

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| FIVE YEAR SENTENCES FOR ANIMAL CRUELTY | 3 |
| PET TRAVEL AND POST - EU PUPPY SMUGGLING | 4 |
| BRACHYCEPHALIC DOG BREEDING | 5 |
| REGULATION OF RESCUES AND REHOMING CENTRES | 6 |
| CONSOLIDATION OF DOG LAW | 7 |
| BREED SPECIFIC LEGISLATION | 8 |
| ROAD TRAFFIC ACT (1988) TO INCLUDE CATS | 9 |
| COMPULSORY MICROCHIPPING | 10 |
| BANNING SHOCK COLLARS | 11 |
| GREYHOUND WELFARE | 12 |
| PET FRIENDLY PROPERTIES | 13 |
| LONELINESS AND SOCIAL PRESCRIBING | 14 |

FIVE YEAR SENTENCES FOR ANIMAL CRUELTY

The maximum prison sentence of six months for cruelty to animals in England and Wales is the lowest in Europe. Our research report found that six months was the lowest custodial sentence in the 100 global jurisdictions we studied. For example, the maximum sentence is five years imprisonment in Ireland and New Zealand. However, the Scottish Government have brought forward the Animals and Wildlife (Penalties, Protections and Powers) (Scotland) Bill which is currently making its way through the parliamentary process in Scotland, and will introduce a five year maximum sentence for animal cruelty.²

As a result of our campaign and cross-party political support and work, backed by over 70,000 Battersea supporters and 122 MPs, the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill was laid in Parliament on 26 June 2019.³ Disappointingly, the Bill has fallen for a second time due to the General Election being called.

Given the popular support for the Bill, we hope the new Government will reintroduce this Bill as quickly as possible, providing a deterrent for the worst acts of animal cruelty, ensuring those who commit animal cruelty are punished proportionately.

SPARKLE'S STORY

Sparkle, Staffie

Sparkle was found abandoned in a park by a member of the public, having been zipped inside a suitcase. Weak from malnutrition, she could barely hold her head up. Sparkle was rushed to Battersea, where she received the care she desperately needed to stay alive. Sparkle was a very sweet dog in spite of her suffering, and once she was well enough she soon found a loving home. Not all animals subjected to human cruelty are so lucky, and perpetrators must be punished with the full force of the law. Five-year sentences would be a far more effective deterrent than the current six months and would help to spare the suffering of animals like Sparkle.

Visit notfunny.battersea.org.uk for more information.

¹ http://notfunny.battersea.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/BDCH_Sentencing_Report.pdf

² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/protecting-scotlands-future-governments-programme-scotland-2019-20/>

³ <https://services.Parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/animalwelfare-sentencing.html>



PET TRAVEL AND POST – EU PUPPY SMUGGLING

One of the main drivers behind the illegal puppy trade is the internet where many of the puppies bred on puppy farms are sold to new owners, who are often oblivious to their origin. Amendments to the Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2019⁴ will impose a ban on the import of puppies and kittens under the age of six months old for commercial sale, which Battersea supports. However, this legislation will only apply to England, so it is imperative that a strong framework exists to prevent a potential increase in imports across the UK. **Battersea would recommend increasing the current waiting period after the vaccination for rabies to 12 weeks. This would make puppy smuggling a less attractive “business proposition” whilst reducing disease risks.**

Better enforcement of border control checks is vital to root out illegally sourced animals entering the UK, bringing significant potential disease risk to animals and people. **There needs to be more vigorous checking at ports of documentation of the age of the animals being transported, stricter penalties and enforcement for those bringing cruelly transported puppies and kittens into the UK, and tighter Regulations on the transportation of animals into the UK.**

Puppies and kittens should also be treated against ticks before entering the UK to help prevent the spread of diseases, some of which are not currently in the UK.

BUDDY'S STORY

Buddy, Dachshund

Buddy arrived at Battersea after his owner could no longer care for him. Bought online, he was imported into the UK from Hungary and then given up six weeks later. Buddy's owner had trouble dealing with his behavioural difficulties, such as constant barking, which appear to have resulted from poor socialisation with other animals. On top of this, Buddy was a rabies risk and had had a bout of vomiting and diarrhoea, which could have been a result of his travel history. Puppies bred abroad and then either imported or smuggled in for sale on the UK market pose a risk for both owners, who may have to deal with behavioural and medical issues, and other animals, who are at risk of contracting foreign diseases.

⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2019/1093/introduction/made>



Buddy

BRACHYCEPHALIC DOG BREEDING

Brachycephalic or “flat-faced” dogs, such as Pugs and French Bulldogs, have become increasingly popular. In 2018, Battersea took in 40 French Bulldogs, a huge leap from the eight that came through our gates in 2014. Battersea also cared for more Pugs than ever before, with 47 dogs of this breed coming to the rescue centre in 2018, compared to 38 the previous year. Furthermore, the French Bulldog is now the UK’s most popular dog breed for the first time since records began.⁵

Their flat faces mean these dogs have been bred to have short, obstructed airways and they often need major, in some cases even lifesaving, surgery just to be able to breathe. In 2018, Battersea performed this operation – known as Brachycephalic Obstructive Airway Syndrome (BOAS) surgery more than ever before in our history. Battersea performed 62 BOAS surgeries on brachycephalic dogs, an 886 percent increase since 2015.

The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 state that no dog should be kept for breeding by licensed breeders if breeding from it endangers the health and welfare of either the dog itself or its offspring.⁶

We believe these regulations should become law for any breeder, accompanied by a public awareness campaign about these breeds, their health problems and the cost of caring for these dogs. This would help the public to make more informed decisions about the puppy they are seeking to buy or rescue.

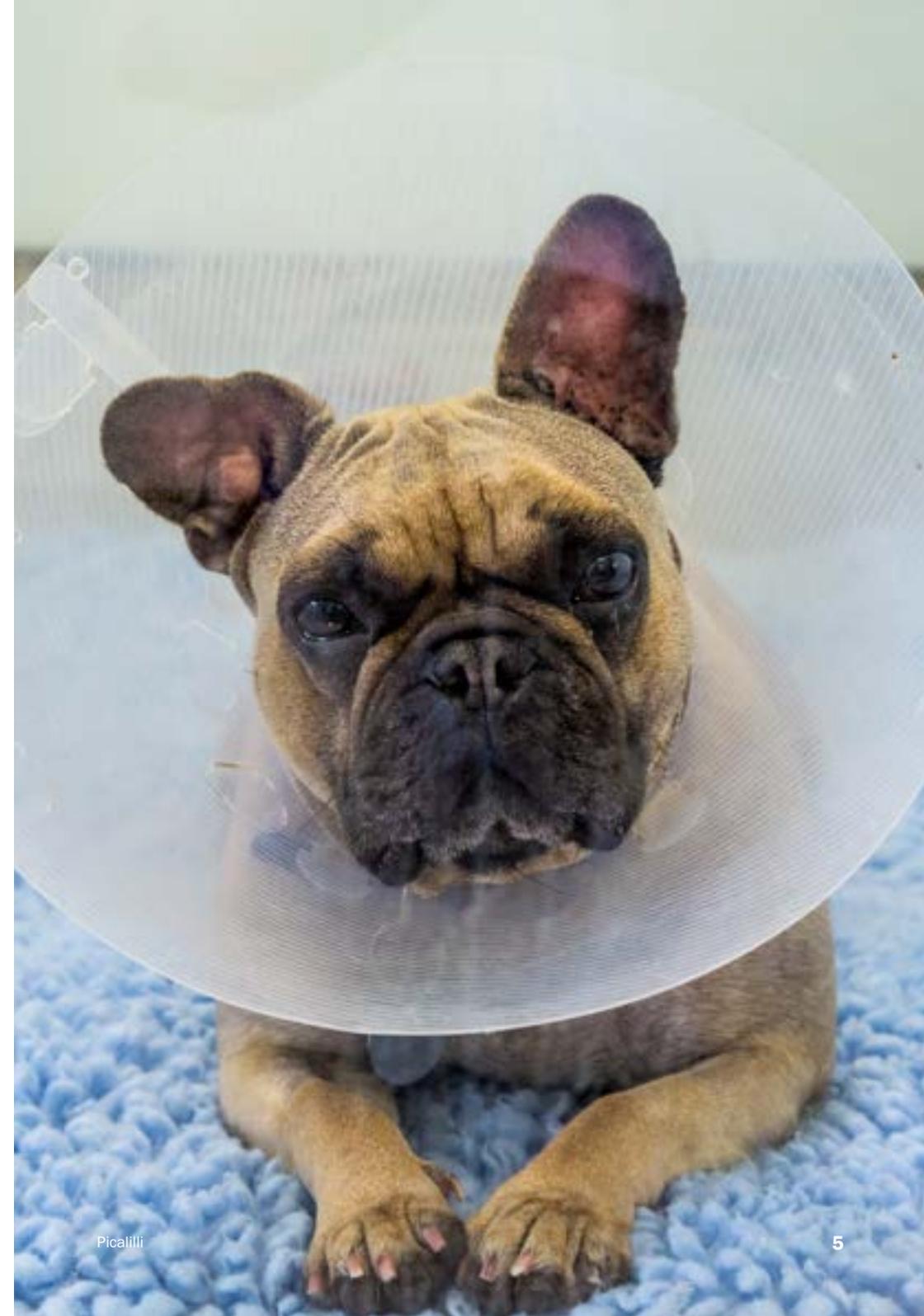
PICCALILLI’S STORY

Piccalilli, French Bulldog

Piccalilli’s previous owner handed her into Battersea as they could no longer afford her vet bills. As well as having breathing problems, Piccalilli also had recurrent ear infections and itchy skin. While at Battersea, Piccalilli underwent extensive surgery to try and correct her breathing, however the veterinary team found that her BOAS was particularly bad, and the surgery could never correct her breathing completely. However, Piccalilli recovered well from her operation and has now found her new home and family.

⁵. <https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/press-releases/2018/june/french-bulldogs-overtake-labradors-as-uks-most-popular-dog-breed/>

⁶. <http://www.cfs.gov.uk/The%20Animal%20Welfare%20Licensing%20of%20Activities%20Involvi/d.%20Dog%20Breeding%20Guidance%20Revised%2030.11.pdf>



REGULATION OF RESCUES AND REHOMING CENTRES

Animal rescues or rehoming centres and sanctuaries are not currently regulated in England, Scotland and Wales, so anyone can open one. Anyone who operates such an organisation must ensure that they meet the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act 2006. However, there are no specific legal criteria for how a centre should operate.

Battersea believes there should be a legally required standard for all rescues, rehoming centres and sanctuaries to improve animal welfare and give the public confidence in the animals they take into their homes.

The Scottish Government has made a commitment to introduce new licensing legislation to regulate rescue and rehoming centres in Scotland. We hope that the next Westminster Government will also regulate these establishments in England.

Regulating rescues will also make it easier to distinguish between genuine rescue and rehoming centres, back street breeders and third party sellers trying to bypass recent laws prohibiting third party sales of puppies and kittens.

The Association of Dogs and Cats Homes (ADCH)

ADCH promotes best practice in dog and cat rescue organisations throughout the UK and Ireland. With 140 members including Battersea, ADCH is a significant force in the animal welfare space that seeks to better the lives of dogs and cats in rescue and rehoming centres. However, more needs to be done to regulate both existing and new rescue organisations and ensure the wellbeing of the dogs and cats in their care. If the Government were to introduce licensing, the work of the ADCH and other reputable rescues would be reinforced, with great benefits for dogs and cats.



CONSOLIDATION OF DOG LAW

There are too many different pieces of legislation that deal with dogs, some of which date back to the 19th century, leaving dog owners and enforcers confused. **Battersea would like to see these pieces of legislation brought together in one consolidated Act.** This will help end confusion, support responsible dog ownership, safeguard the public and protect dog welfare.

Most importantly, it is a genuine opportunity to review the way we treat our dogs, preserving what is good and effective and making the changes necessary to demonstrate our position as a “nation of animal lovers”.

One consolidated Act will provide a clear statement of how dogs should be cared for and how enforcers should respond if these standards are not met, giving Parliament a chance to correct mistakes going back many years.

FERNANDO'S STORY

Fernando, Lurcher

Fernando was only around six weeks old when a member of the public found him wandering in the road as a stray. Not microchipped (breaching The Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015),⁷ wearing no collar and tag (breaching the Control of Dogs Order 1992)⁸ and suffering from a severe untreated flea infestation (breaching the Animal Welfare Act 2006),⁹ it's likely that he had spent several days or more outside on his own. At an age where he should still have been learning to play with his littermates, Fernando was alone and in danger. Luckily, being brought to a rescue centre meant that he began to receive the care he needed, and Battersea staff quickly placed him with a foster carer so that he could begin to learn about life in a home. There are many ways that dogs can be put at risk due to a lack of knowledge or care – a consolidated Act would help to lessen these risks and ensure that dogs like Fernando are treated well throughout their lives.

⁷ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2015/9780111125243>

⁸ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1992/901/article/2/made>

⁹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/45/contents>



BREED SPECIFIC LEGISLATION

Section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act (1991) bans four types of dog based on their appearance and an erroneous belief that they are innately dangerous. This Act was meant to protect the public, yet the number of dog attacks continues to rise.¹⁰ Assuming a dog is dangerous because of the way it looks is no way to reduce dog attacks, and is leading to hundreds of dogs being needlessly put down without a significant improvement in public safety. After 28 years, the time is long overdue for the law to be repealed.

In 2016, Battersea research found that 74 percent of behaviourists believed that a dog's breed is of little or no relevance in determining whether it will go on to become aggressive.¹¹

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee held an inquiry into the legislation in 2018. The Committee recommended that the legislation should be reviewed, accompanied by adequate Regulation of animal centres, so that they can begin to find new homes for currently banned breed dogs, provided the dog passes necessary behavioural tests.¹²

We call on the new Government to repeal Section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act, and the unfair, ineffective protection it fails to offer as soon as possible.¹³

ZAMPA'S STORY

Zampa, Pit Bull

Zampa was brought into Battersea when his owner fell ill and could no longer walk him. Having previously been a much loved pet, Zampa comfortably passed his behavioural assessment and was soon ready to be rehomed. However, when viewed by a Dog Legislation Police Officer, Zampa was deemed to be a Pit Bull type and Battersea were legally required to euthanise him. Cases like Zampa's are needlessly repeated over and over again in rescue centres all around the country, placing a heavy burden on staff and an unfair sentence on the lives of hundreds of beloved pets simply because they look a certain way.

¹⁰. <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/hospital-admitted-patient-care-activity/2016-17>

¹¹. <http://www.bdch.org.uk/files/Dog-bites-whats-breed-got-to-do-with-it.pdf>.

¹². <https://publications.Parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmenvfru/1040/1040.pdf>

¹³. <https://publications.Parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmenvfru/1892/1892.pdf>



Zampa

ROAD TRAFFIC ACT (1988) TO INCLUDE CATS

Battersea believes that the new Government should include cats in the compulsory reporting of motoring accidents involving animals. Under the Road Traffic Act (1988), Section 170,¹⁴ drivers are required to stop and report incidents of hitting a horse, cattle, ass, mule, sheep, pig, goat or dog.

In 2018, a study by CarBuyer found almost 60 percent of those surveyed agree the law should be changed to include cats as well.¹⁵ Their research, along with figures from Highways England, indicated as many as 8,000 cats are killed in road collisions and left unreported each year in England alone. This change would bring peace of mind for cat owners and see the law treat cats as similarly important as other animals.

Battersea recommends that the Act is amended to make it compulsory for Highways England and Local Authority officers to record and scan dogs and cats that are killed on our roads for a microchip, as this will help provide certainty to many owners whose pets are killed under these tragic circumstances. At Battersea, we microchip every cat that comes to us for this and other reasons.

PHOENIX'S STORY

Phoenix, Domestic Short-hair

Compulsory microchipping of cats and requiring the relevant authorities to scan for a microchip would provide many owners with this much needed peace of mind. Most of the stray cats who arrive at Battersea appear to have previously lived in a home. They are often friendly, well fed and know how to use a litter tray. Many such strays are not microchipped, meaning it is nearly impossible to reunite them with their owners. Cats like Phoenix, who was affectionate with people and significantly overweight when she arrived, appear to simply have wandered too far from home and then been picked up by a well-meaning member of the public. As she didn't have a microchip and no owner came forward, Battersea's only choice was to find her a new home. Although it was a happy ending for Phoenix, her original owners will not have the comfort of knowing what happened to their cat because he was not microchipped.

¹⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/52/contents>

¹⁵ <http://www.carbuyer.co.uk/news/162554/drivers-call-for-equal-rights-for-cats-and-dogs>



COMPULSORY MICROCHIPPING

Battersea believes that microchipping is the most effective way of ensuring that a dog or cat can be safely and quickly reunited with its owner. In 2018, 81 percent of dogs and 39 percent of cats came into our centres with a microchip. Thanks to accurate microchip details, Battersea was able to reunite 892 dogs and 333 cats with their owners.

Since the introduction of the compulsory microchipping of dogs in April 2016,¹⁶ Battersea has conducted an annual survey to assess the effectiveness of microchipping. Our fourth report, conducted this year, found that only 25 percent of dogs who stray and are picked up by Local Authorities can be easily reunited with their owner from a microchip record – compared to 31 percent who have no microchip and 44 percent which have a microchip but inaccurate records on a compliant microchip database.¹⁷

There is a strong case for compulsory microchipping of cats, and it is undoubtedly best practice. Battersea welcomes any moves to increase the microchipping of cats, although there are still clear issues with the microchipping of dogs which require attention.

Battersea research shows that enforcement measures around microchipping have been effective but are infrequently used. With these Regulations due to be reviewed in 2020, we recommend that Local Authorities be permitted to issue Fixed Penalty Notices as a useful tool to increase compliance rates, and that information on the effectiveness of enforcement be better shared between Councils.¹⁸

SHEBA'S STORY

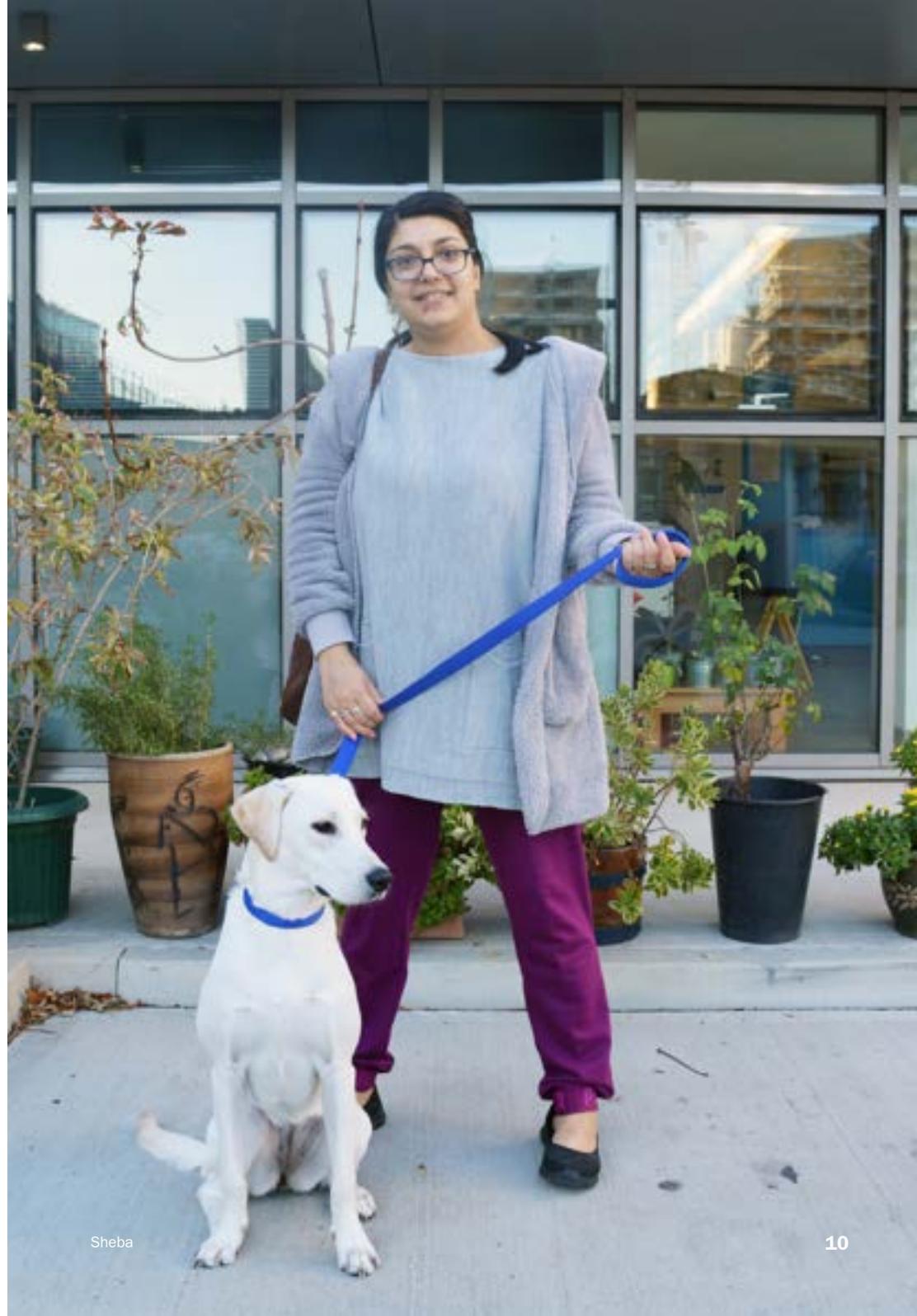
Sheba, Golden Retriever

Nine-month-old Sheba was brought into Battersea when her owners could no longer care for her. A routine microchip scan revealed that Sheba had been reported as stolen four months previously. Battersea were able to contact her original owner, Neha, who had lost nearly all hope of ever finding her again. The pair were reunited at Battersea, thanks to Sheba's microchip details. Their story shows how vital microchips are as a record of an animal's whereabouts and ownership.

¹⁶. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/108/contents/made>

¹⁷. http://www.bdch.org.uk/files/Microchipping_Report_2019.pdf

¹⁸. http://www.bdch.org.uk/files/Microchipping_Report_2019.pdf



Sheba

BANNING SHOCK COLLARS

Training a dog with 'negative reinforcement' methods such as electric shock collars enforce behaviour through fear and suffering. Battersea believes that delivering electronic shocks to dogs is never justified and these practices have already been banned in Wales. Positive reinforcement techniques are both more caring and more effective at making long-term behaviour changes. Battersea cares for many of the most challenging dogs and achieves incredible and lasting results without ever using shock collars.

The Scottish Government has introduced Guidance which says that using aversive stimuli may cause unacceptable pain, suffering and distress. However, this Guidance is not enforceable in a Court in its current form. We would encourage Ministers in both London and Edinburgh to go further to protect dogs from harm. It is possible to cause significant damage to a dog with these collars.

Battersea welcomes the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA's) commitment to ban the use of these collars, and we hope that the Regulations to introduce this ban are brought forward soon.

BOBO'S STORY

Bobo, Pomeranian

Bobo was brought into Battersea when his previous owners moved abroad. When he arrived at Battersea, Bobo was wearing an electric shock collar. Still seen as an acceptable training method to some people, Bobo's owners had been using it to shock him whenever he barked. Bobo was twelve years old when he arrived and had been living with the fear of electric shocks ever since he was a puppy.



GREYHOUND WELFARE

In 2018, Battersea rehomed 123 Greyhounds. These loving ex-racers make wonderful family pets, yet in the racing world they can be badly mistreated.

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee conducted a review of Greyhound welfare, which recommended many positive changes.¹⁹ These included plans to provide financial support from bookmakers for the welfare of Greyhounds, and improving the standards of all trainers' tracks and kennels, not just those currently regulated by Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB).

Funding for these improvements in the welfare of Greyhounds should be provided by bookmakers, who profit significantly while trainers and the dogs in their care are under-resourced for key welfare improvements. Bookmakers both online and on the high street should pay their fair share towards improving the welfare of Greyhounds in the sport, and the voluntary levy of bookmakers should be made compulsory. **Furthermore, the new Government should continue advocating for a statutory levy post-Brexit when EU state aid restrictions will no longer apply.**

QUEST'S STORY

Quest, Greyhound

Ex-racing Greyhound Quest arrived at Battersea Old Windsor ²⁰ when he was three years old having never experienced life in a home. He quickly proved himself to be a friendly and easy-going dog, and yet it took him 157 days to find a new home. Stories like this are not uncommon for Greyhounds. They frequently take longer to find homes due to public perception of them as active and hyper-focused dogs, when in fact they are generally relaxed and make good pets for less mobile owners. Ex-racers sometimes take time to adjust to life in a home, as most will only ever have lived in kennels. By investing in their welfare this will help to shift perceptions of the breed and show that they are and deserve to be fantastic pets.

¹⁹ <https://publications.Parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmselect/cmenvfru/478/47802.htm>

²⁰ <https://www.battersea.org.uk/about-us/visit-us/visit-battersea-old-windsor>



Quest

PET FRIENDLY PROPERTIES

Eight million households in the UK rent their homes and 3.4 million UK homes are socially rented.²¹ Therefore, it is no surprise that housing is the second biggest reason why animals are given to Battersea to be rehomed. Owners are often no longer able to keep their beloved dog or cat, due to moving to a property which does not allow pets. However, pet ownership is shown to make for happier homes and communities.

Residents in social housing are particularly vulnerable to the barriers surrounding pet ownership, as they do not have the choices around where they live that some private renters do. Battersea's 2018 research has revealed that 21 percent of London Councils and 64 percent of the capital's largest Housing Associations ban owning a dog in flats with no direct garden or street access.²²

Battersea offers Councils and Housing Associations advice and practical support on how they can review and improve their own policies around pets. We offer training and advise tenants looking to own a pet in social housing. **We kindly ask MPs to engage with their Local Authority and local Housing Associations to help more people enjoy the benefits of pet ownership, and to partner with Battersea where we can provide any further advice or training.**

MAIZIE'S STORY

Maizie, Shih Tzu

One pet who benefits from a pet-friendly rental policy is Maizie, an eleven-year-old Shih Tzu. Maizie was adopted from Battersea by Bubbles Neal, who lives in social housing in Wandsworth. Before coming to Battersea, Bubbles wasn't sure whether she would be able to rehome a dog. Maizie is a wonderful companion for Bubbles and being able to have a dog in her home has enriched her life beyond measure.

²¹. <https://www.pwc.co.uk/assets/pdf/ukeyo-section3-housing-market-july-2015.pdf>

²². <https://www.battersea.org.uk/support-us/campaigns/pet-friendly-properties>



Maizie

LONELINESS AND SOCIAL PRESCRIBING

Battersea prides itself on being there for every dog and cat, but we also know that our pets can be there for us too.

The previous Government sought to tackle loneliness through the Loneliness Strategy, which Battersea welcomes. However, the Strategy²³ does not fully examine the ways in which dogs or cats could help to tackle loneliness. **The Government should conduct further research into the benefits of dog and cat ownership (currently being investigated by All-Party Parliamentary Group on Cats), in addition to allowing and promoting dog or cat ownership as a viable treatment option, or social prescription, for loneliness.**

The term 'social prescribing' allows local agencies to 'connect people to community groups and statutory services for practical and emotional support'.²⁴ We believe pet ownership could be a useful social prescription tool.

Dog or cat ownership may not be suitable or possible for everyone, maybe due to long working hours or housing pet policies. However, rescue charities like Battersea often offer volunteer roles. Volunteering offers an opportunity for people to interact with animals and meet new people, in addition to offering structure and routine which can be helpful in alleviating loneliness.

TEDDY'S STORY

Teddy, Mongrel (Yorkshire Terrier X)

Teddy was brought into Battersea when his owner's circumstances changed. After a short stay, he went to live in Eastbourne with his new owner, who runs a residential home for people with disabilities. Teddy is a live-in companion for the residents, who help care for him, take him for walks and give him plenty of attention. Since being rehomed, Teddy has brightened the lives of all the staff and residents in the home, proving the benefits pets can bring to those at risk of social isolation.'

You can watch a video about Teddy here: [youtube.com/watch?v=E5qJhIBzRUK](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5qJhIBzRUK)

²³. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/750909/6.4882_DCMS_Loneliness_Strategy_web_Update.pdf

²⁴. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/personalisedcare/social-prescribing/>



Teddy



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