## How can I make a difference to the lives of pet animals? (1)

The following ideas are suggestions for reparation ideas where a young person's offence has involved a pet animal. All the activities give young people the chance to do something positive for pet animals, while some also promote general animal welfare and involvement in the local community.

### 1. What do pets need?

The young person can find out about pets' needs by doing one or both of the following.

- a. Go through some of the activities in the *Basic welfare needs and sentience* section of this resource or use the internet to find out what pets need. There's advice on how to keep pets happy and healthy at <a href="www.rspca.org.uk">www.rspca.org.uk</a>. Just select the *All about animals* tab, then *Our pets*.
- b. Click on the *All about animals* tab on the RSPCA website homepage, select *Our pets* and then *General pet care* to see some of the RSPCA's concerns about caring for pets. There are links to:
  - fireworks
  - microchipping
  - neutering
  - fleas
  - worms
  - pet obesity.

The young person could think about ways of sharing what they've found out with other people, to encourage responsible pet care.

Who would benefit from knowing it?

- Family?
- Friends?
- Other young people they know?
- Others in the local community?

How can the young person share the information?

- By talking to people they know?
- By creating a poster or a leaflet to put up at home or leave in the local library?
- By putting a display in a vets or youth centre?
- By applying what they've learned to their own pet, or asking friends or family to do so?





# How can I make a difference to the lives of pet animals? (2)

### 2. Practical pet care

Find out whether there is an opportunity for the young person to get first-hand experience of what it means to look after a pet animal by helping a friend or relative with the day-to-day care of their pet. First, the young person will need to understand the needs of the animal and how to meet those needs appropriately. Go to <a href="www.rspca.org.uk">www.rspca.org.uk</a>, click on the All about animals tab and select Our pets for information about basic pet needs. There are also some Ground rules for pet animals in the Who is responsible? section of this resource.

## 3. Campaign for the RSPCA

Young people could make a real difference to the lives of pet animals by supporting an RSPCA campaign. They can find details of current campaigns by going to <a href="www.rspca.org.uk">www.rspca.org.uk</a> and clicking on Campaigns. They can check out how campaigning makes a difference, and could find out how to:

- collect signatures for a petition to support a current RSPCA campaign
- write a letter to their MP or Assembly Member
- promote RSPCA campaigns on personal social networking pages.

### 4. Litter pick

The young person could do a litter pick in a local area where pet animals might go, for example near a pond, in a park, field or open space. They could do it on their own initiative; or community groups or the local authority might be organising one that they could join.

RSPCA inspectors regularly rescue pet animals trapped or hurt by discarded litter, as everyday objects can become hazards to animals. In a survey by the charity Environmental Campaigns (ENCAMS), 95 per cent of vets had treated an animal with an injury caused by litter. They reported treating an average of 20 animals per surgery in the previous year.



# How can I make a difference to the lives of pet animals? (3)

#### The risks

- Glass
   Glass bottles and jars break easily, leaving sharp pieces that can cause serious injury to animals or even death.
- Cans
   Animals such as cats may get their heads trapped inside cans a half-open lid can cut.
- Plastic bags
   Plastic bags can trap and suffocate pet animals, such as cats.

See the factsheet *Litter stories* for specific incidents of litter harming pet animals.

### 5. Raise money for the RSPCA

There are many ideas for fundraising activities on the main RSPCA website. Go to www.rspca.org.uk, select the Get involved tab, and then Get fundraising.

#### 6. Collect for a local animal centre

Animal centres rely on local volunteers to help them look after rescued pet animals, so there may be opportunities for the young person to support the work of a centre in their own community. Contact your local centre to ask whether there are any items they need, such as food or blankets, which the young person could collect. You can find local RSPCA animal homes by going to the RSPCA website <a href="https://www.rspca.org.uk">www.rspca.org.uk</a> and selecting the *In your area* tag.



## How can I make a difference to the lives of pet animals? (4)

### 7. Support a local RSPCA branch

There may be other activities available through the young person's local RSPCA branch. Each branch has different needs, but possible activities could include:

- helping with gardening or maintenance work at an animal home
- working in a charity shop
- helping to raise funds
- creating and/or distributing posters to charity shops, libraries, vets and other venues for an event, scheme, recruitment drive or campaign.

Get in touch with your nearest branch to ask what they can offer. You can find it by going to <a href="www.rspca.org.uk">www.rspca.org.uk</a> and selecting *In your area*, then *Any service*.

