

Summary:
Midlands

PAW

PDSA ANIMAL WELLBEING

REPORT

2018

The essential
insight into
the wellbeing
of UK pets

Methodology

This summary provides an overview of key findings for pets in the Midlands from our 2018 PDSA Animal Wellbeing (PAW) Report.

We surveyed a demographically representative sample of 4,639 UK pet owners in partnership with YouGov for the main Report, and we present here the results for the subset of these owners living in the Midlands.

Our total sample size was 794 dog, cat, and rabbit owners; aged 18 or over; and living in the East and West Midlands. Fieldwork was undertaken between 9th and 19th January 2018. The survey was conducted online and statistically analysed by YouGov.

Percentages were rounded to the nearest whole number. A minimum sample size of 50 was set to ensure robust results.

UK figures are taken from the main PAW Report and full methods are detailed therein. They have only been given for comparison where regional results are **statistically significantly different** from them. These have been highlighted in bold for clarity.

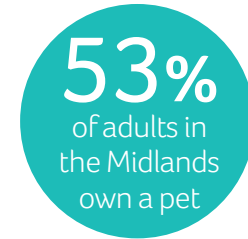
In the Midlands we surveyed ...

363 dog owners
326 cat owners
105 rabbit owners

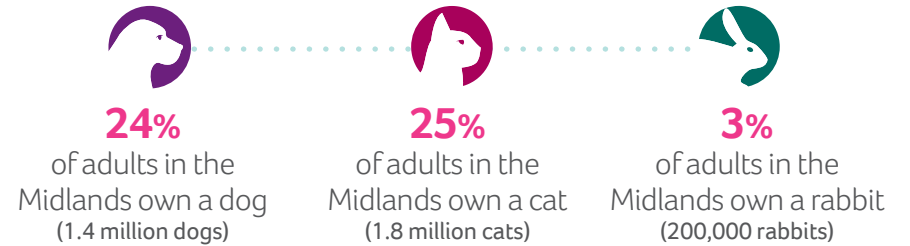
You can download the full PAW Report from our website pdsa.org.uk/pawreport

Population

These estimates are calculated using a combination of data collected for the PAW Report, a nationally representative survey of UK adults, and official government statistics.



When calculating population figures in the rest of this report we've taken the population figure here, multiplied it by the percentage, then rounded to two significant figures.



100 years

As the UK's leading veterinary charity, PDSA is committed to identifying and addressing barriers to pet wellbeing. After 100 years of working every single day to improve the lives of our nation's pets, we can reflect on how far we have come, and how far we still have to go.

The findings of our PAW Report continue to provide a valuable insight into the wellbeing of our nation's pets. We're incredibly proud that over the last eight years these findings have helped form the basis of campaigns and collaborative initiatives across the animal welfare sector and veterinary profession, to help improve pet wellbeing and give our nation's pets the great lives they deserve.



The 5 Welfare Needs

This report is structured around owners' knowledge and application of the Animal Welfare Acts and the 5 Welfare Needs that are enshrined within them.

In the Midlands ...

42% of owners state they are familiar with the Animal Welfare Act 2006 (better than the UK average 38%)

24% of owners feel very informed with all 5 Welfare Needs but only

13% of owners are able to correctly identify all 5 Welfare Needs



Similar to UK figures, owners in the Midlands feeling very informed of the 5 Welfare Needs did not translate to the ability to correctly identify them from a list, even though a higher proportion claimed familiarity with the relevant Animal Welfare Act.

Pre-purchase

Despite pre-purchase research being a vital part of responsible pet ownership, 26% of pet owners in the Midlands did none at all before choosing a pet.

In the Midlands ...

Only 36% of pet owners visited their pet on more than one occasion before taking them home

17% of pet owners would consider buying from a puppy farm

Top places owners in the Midlands got their pet ...

31%
dog owners
Breeder of one specific breed

37%
cat owners
Rescue or rehoming centre / shelter

39%
rabbit owners
Pet shop / garden centre

Costs of pet ownership

67% of dog owners in the Midlands underestimated the minimum lifetime cost of dog ownership

95% of cat owners in the Midlands underestimated the minimum lifetime cost of cat ownership

97% of rabbit owners in the Midlands underestimated the minimum lifetime cost of rabbit ownership

For details of how we calculated the costs of ownership and what owners were asked to include in this estimate, please refer to the full Report available online at pdsa.org.uk/pawreport

in summary ...

Owners in the Midlands display short-comings in pre-purchase research and consistently underestimate the cost of pet ownership, reflecting the same problems found in the rest of the UK.



Environment

More owners in the Midlands than in the whole UK expressed concerns about walking their dogs

- 280,000 dogs (20%) are walked less than once a day
- **59% of owners have one or more concerns about walking their dog (higher than the UK average 53%)**

Diet

Results in the Midlands are similar to UK averages, with dog obesity remaining a key problem

- 20% of dog owners matched the shape of their pet to an overweight or obese silhouette (body condition score (BCS) 4/5 or 5/5)
- 36% of owners did not know the weight or BCS of their dog

Behaviour

Results in the Midlands are similar to UK averages, with a high proportion of dogs showing fearful or troublesome behaviours

- 11% of dog owners (150,000 dogs) haven't trained their dog in any way
- 81% of dog owners (1.1 million dogs) report that they would like to change at least one of their dog's behaviours
- 1.1 million dogs (81%) are reported to be afraid of something (e.g. fireworks, thunder and lightning)
- 500,000 dogs (36%) are afraid of fireworks

Companionship

Results in the Midlands are similar to UK averages, with a high proportion of dogs being left alone for longer than acceptable

- 360,000 dogs (26%) are left alone for 5 or more hours on a typical weekday
- 10% of owners report that they'd like to change their dog showing signs of distress when left alone

Health

Results in the Midlands reveal several shortfalls in preventive health provisions, and there is a lower rate of microchipping than the UK average

- 9% of dogs (130,000 dogs) aren't registered with a vet
- 44% of dogs (620,000 dogs) aren't insured
- **180,000 of dogs (13%) aren't microchipped (worse than UK average 9%)**
- 28% of dogs (390,000 dogs) aren't vaccinated with a primary course when young

in summary ...

Dog owners in the Midlands echo national shortfalls in meeting their dogs' needs, and a regional focus on addressing barriers to walking and increasing microchipping uptake would improve their health and wellbeing.



Cats



Environment

Results in the Midlands are similar to the UK average, with a lack of resources a major problem

- In homes with multiple cats, owners aren't providing enough scratching posts or water bowls for their cats (recommended minimum is number of cats + 1)



Diet

Results in the Midlands are similar to UK averages, with lack of awareness of body shape reflecting a problem with feline obesity

- 55% of cat owners matched the shape of their pet to an overweight or obese silhouette (body condition score (BCS) 4/5 or 5/5)
- 65% of owners don't know the weight or BCS of their cat



Behaviour

Results in the Midlands are similar to UK averages, with complaints of hunting wildlife possibly reflecting a larger rural population

- 80% of cat owners (1.4 million cats) report that they would like to change at least one of their cat's behaviours
- Top three behaviours that owners wanted to change were scratching furniture, scratching carpets and bringing wildlife into the house
- 1.6 million cats (90%) were reported to be afraid of something. The top three fears were vacuum cleaners, loud noises and fireworks



Companionship

Results in the Midlands are similar to UK averages, revealing poor owner understanding of cats' solitary natures

- 850,000 cats (47%) live in a multi-cat household
- 20% of cats live with another cat or cats that they don't get on with



Health

Results in the Midlands are similar to UK averages, with several shortfalls in preventive health provisions

- 20% of cats (360,000 cats) aren't registered with a vet
- 10% of cats (180,000 cats) aren't neutered
- 30% of cats (540,000 cats) aren't microchipped
- 38% of cats (680,000 cats) aren't vaccinated with a primary course when young

in summary ...

Apart from the issues identified for the whole UK, no region-specific concerns emerge for cats in the Midlands. However, there is still much work to be done in line with the recommendations in the full Report to ensure their Welfare Needs are met.

Rabbits



Environment

Results in the Midlands are similar to UK averages, with many rabbits facing life in small, barren hutches

- 27% of rabbits are kept in inadequate housing



Diet

Results in the Midlands are similar to UK averages, where despite some improvement many rabbits are still fed inappropriate diets

- 20% of rabbits are fed rabbit muesli as part of their main diet
- Only 49% of rabbit owners feed the daily recommended amount of hay
- 80% of rabbit owners don't know the weight or body condition score of their rabbit



Behaviour

Results in the Midlands are similar to UK averages, with many natural behaviours being misunderstood as problems

- 54% of rabbit owners want to change at least one of their rabbit's behaviours
- Top three behaviours owners wanted to change were thumping their back feet, chewing furniture etc, and digging up ground and / or carpets
- 61% of rabbits are reported to be afraid of something (e.g. loud noises, fireworks, unfamiliar people)



Companionship

Results in the Midlands are similar to UK averages; despite being highly social many rabbits are kept on their own

- 56% of rabbits live alone



Health

Results in the Midlands are similar to UK averages with the preventive health of many rabbits being neglected

- 33% of rabbits aren't currently registered with a vet
- 49% of rabbits aren't neutered
- 48% of rabbits aren't vaccinated with a primary course when young

in summary ...

Serious issues, similar to those highlighted for the whole of the UK, are facing pet rabbits in the Midlands, owner education across all 5 Welfare Needs must be addressed in order to improve their wellbeing.



Help us improve pet wellbeing

Every year the PAW Report gives us essential insights into pet wellbeing in the UK and this year we have released results for the UK's constituent nations and England's regions to help tailor local strategies.

We'd love for the findings of this year's Report to again be used by the sector to continue to stimulate change – to enable us all to acknowledge the most pressing issues and tackle them head on. This will ensure continued momentum in the drive to improve the welfare of pets in the Midlands and across the UK.

Only through hard work and collaboration can we tackle these issues in order to see improvements in key areas such as obesity, loneliness, behavioural issues, pre-purchase decision making and more in future

**Saving pets is what we do.
Every. Single. Day.**

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