

Summary:
North of England

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 North of England 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 North of England.

Our total sample size was 1094 dog, cat, and rabbit owners; aged 18 or over; and living in the North West, North East and Yorkshire and the Humber ("the North"). 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.

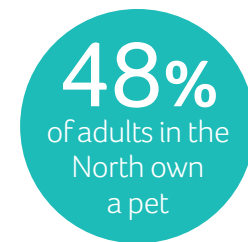
In the North of England we surveyed...

543 dog owners
443 cat owners
108 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.



26%

of adults in the North own a dog
(2.2 million dogs)



23%

of adults in the North own a cat
(2.4 million cats)



2%

of adults in the North own a rabbit
(200,000 rabbits)

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 Act and the 5 Welfare Needs that are enshrined within them.

In the North of England ...

38% of owners state they are familiar with the Animal Welfare Act 2006

22% of owners feel very informed with all 5 Welfare Needs

but only

12% of owners are able to correctly identify all 5 Welfare Needs



Similar to UK figures, owners in the North of England feeling very informed of the 5 Welfare Needs did not translate to the ability to correctly identify them from a list and few were familiar with the relevant Animal Welfare Act.

Pre-purchase

Despite pre-purchase research being a vital part of responsible pet ownership, 22% of pet owners in the North of England did none at all before choosing a pet.

In the North of England ...

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

16% of pet owners would consider buying from a puppy farm

Top places owners in the North of England got their pet ...

27%
dog owners

Breeder of one specific breed

39%

cat owners

Rescue or rehoming centre / shelter (higher than the UK average 34%)

37%
rabbit owners

Pet shop / garden centre

Costs of pet ownership

68% of dog owners underestimated the minimum lifetime cost of dog ownership

94% of cat owners underestimated the minimum lifetime cost of cat ownership

93% of rabbit owners 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 ...

Short-comings in pre-purchase research reflect the same problems as the rest of the UK. Interestingly, a higher proportion of owners in the North of England than the UK average got their cat from a rescue or rehoming centre.



Environment

Results for the North are similar to UK averages, with many owners who walk their dogs expressing concerns about it

- 330,000 dogs (15%) are walked less than once a day
- 20,000 dogs (1%) are never walked
- 53% of owners have one or more concerns about walking their dog

Diet

A higher proportion of owners in the North are unsure of the weight or body condition score of their dog compared to the UK average, and obesity remains an issue

- 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)
- **46% of owners did not know the weight or BCS of their dog (worse than the UK average 40%)**

Behaviour

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

- 15% of dog owners (330,000 dogs) haven't trained their dog in any way
- 79% of dog owners (1.7 million dogs) report that they would like to change at least one of their dog's behaviours
- 1.8 million dogs (83%) are reported to be afraid of something (e.g. fireworks, thunder and lightning)
- 920,000 dogs (42%) are afraid of fireworks

Companionship

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

- 510,000 dogs (23%) are left alone for 5 or more hours on a typical weekday
- 8% of owners report that they'd like to change their dog showing signs of distress when left alone

Health

Results in the North are similar to UK averages, with many still missing out on vital preventive care

- 11% of dogs (240,000 dogs) aren't registered with a vet
- 44% of dogs (970,000 dogs) aren't insured
- 180,000 of dogs (8%) aren't microchipped
- 27% of dogs (590,000 dogs) aren't vaccinated with a primary course when young

in summary ...

Dog owners in the North of England echo national short-comings regarding their pets' Welfare Needs, and a regional focus on educating owners about the importance of recognising the body shape or weight of their dogs is also needed.



Cats



Environment

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

- 56% of cat owners matched the shape of their pet to an overweight or obese silhouette (body condition score (BCS) 4/5 or 5/5)
- 66% of owners don't know the weight or BCS of their cat



Behaviour

Results in the North are similar to UK averages, with many cat owners reporting problematic and fearful behaviours

- 78% of cat owners (1.9 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 begging for food
- 2.2 million cats (90%) were reported to be afraid of something. The top three fears were unfamiliar people, vacuum cleaner and travelling in the car



Companionship

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

- 1.0 million cats (42%) live in a multi-cat household
- 18% of cats live with another cat or cats that they don't get on with



Health

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

- 19% of cats (460,000 cats) aren't registered with a vet
- 8% of cats (190,000 cats) aren't neutered
- 33% of cats (790,000 cats) aren't microchipped
- 36% of cats (860,000 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 North of England. 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 North are similar to UK averages, with many rabbits facing life in small, barren hutches

- 31% of rabbits are kept in inadequate housing



Diet

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

- 19% of rabbits are fed rabbit muesli as part of their main diet
- Only 57% of rabbit owners feed the daily recommended amount of hay
- 76% of rabbit owners don't know the weight or body condition score of their rabbit



Behaviour

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

- 49% of rabbit owners want to change at least one of their rabbit's behaviours
- Top three behaviours owners wanted to change were thumping back feet, chewing furniture etc, and digging up ground and / or carpets
- 71% of rabbits are reported to be afraid of something (e.g. loud noises, fireworks, unfamiliar people)



Companionship

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

- 47% of rabbits live alone



Health

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

- 31% of rabbits aren't currently registered with a vet
- 41% of rabbits aren't neutered
- 51% 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 North of England. 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 North of England 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 PAW Reports.

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

Your support today will save pets' lives tomorrow.

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