

Comfort in crisis: Leading animal organisations unite to support pets and owners through Coronavirus (COVID-19)

UK's best-loved national pet charities and experts join forces to offer advice to help owners care for their animals and each other

The coalition is concerned about conflicting and poor information which is leaving owners confused and anxious and animals potentially at risk.

The group has produced a series of colourful graphics giving tips and advice on how to look after your pets while you protect yourself, how to care for pets while social distancing or in self-isolation and how to help others look after their animals. The group are urging pet-owners to share the easy to understand graphics across their networks. These will be also posted on the organisations' websites - so owners get good, clear advice.

Chris Laurence, chair of the Canine and Feline Sector Group, said: "We are concerned that rapidly changing and conflicting information was leaving pet owners confused and worried. Those of us who work with animals are concerned that this information could leave animals at risk as pets could end up abandoned by anxious families unsure if they pose a risk or how they can care for them in isolation.

"We have come together to reassure people that there is no evidence that pets can get sick from coronavirus so not to panic or worry. We have also written some clear and simple tips about how to continue to care for them through this crisis.

25.3.20

COMFORT IN CRISIS Pets and Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Here are some top tips from the UK's best loved national pet charities and experts.

Pets and Coronavirus PROTECTING EACH OTHER

- 1 There is no evidence that pets can get sick from COVID-19.
- 2 Just like human hands, pet fur could carry the virus from one person to another.
- 3 Wash hands well with soap after touching any pets or their belongings and avoid pet kisses – them and you!
- 4 If your pet is sick or injured, call your vet before going to the surgery.

Pets provide invaluable companionship, let's take care of them too

Pets and Coronavirus PRACTISE SOCIAL DISTANCING

- 1 Each person in the household can walk your dog once a day, but...
- 2 Keep you and your dog at least two metres from others.
- 3 Avoid contact with other people's pets.
- 4 Ensure you have your pet's normal supplies for 14 days; make only essential trips to the pet shop.

Wash your hands, follow the latest Government guidance and play your part to protect others

Pets and Coronavirus IF YOU ARE SELF-ISOLATING

- 1 Think about how you can provide for your pet's needs.
- 2 Dogs can be let out into your garden, or just outside your home to toilet, but keep your distance from others and minimise time outside.*
- 3 Can anyone else care for your pet if you are sick or in hospital?
- 4 If your cat is used to staying in then keep them inside and clean their litter tray regularly. If an outdoor cat, try and minimise interactions with them.*

If you are sick, restrict close contact with your pets

Pets and Coronavirus HELPING EACH OTHER

- 1 Can you safely help a vulnerable person in your community with their pet?
- 2 Can you offer remote help to your local animal charity?
- 3 Could you donate pet food to your local food bank?
- 4 All animal charities will be impacted by this crisis - please consider donating to support their work.

Pets are family – let's look out for each other

To find out more visit: www.cfsg.org.uk/coronavirus

*Advice on these specific points may be subject to change so please regularly check Government guidance.



“Like many others, the animal welfare sector is facing huge strain, with reduced staffing, loss of volunteers and pressure on resources. We need to reassure owners with good advice so they can continue to look after their pets and this will help prevent rescue centres being overwhelmed at this challenging time.”

“Pets are a big part of our families and it is important to make sure they stay happy and healthy during these difficult times. Isolation for us can mean some big changes for our pets and they won’t understand why. We hope this advice will help owners help their pets, while looking after themselves too.”

Ends

Notes to editors

The full list of organisations is as follows:

ABTC (Animal Behaviour and Training Council), ADCH (Association of Dogs and Cats Homes, Battersea, Blue Cross, BSAVA (British Small Animals Vet Association), BVA (British Vet Association) Cats Protection, Dogs Trust, PDSA (People’s Dispensary for Sick Animals, PFMA, (Pet Food Manufacturing Organisation) PIF, (Pet Industry Federation) RSPCA, Scottish SPCA, Canine and Feline Sector Group and The Kennel Club.

Images and audio clip from Chris Laurence can be downloaded [here](#)

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