



## **RESPONSIBLE CAT BREEDING GUIDELINES**

**Please note: This document will be a base for developing shorter and user-friendly documents targeted at relevant audiences.**

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### About cats

The domestic cat (*Felis silvestris catus*) retains many behaviours and needs of their wild ancestor, the African wildcat (*Felis silvestris libyca*). Cats are both predator and prey, they are lone hunters that exhibit territorial behaviour, preferring familiar territory; they have an acute awareness of their physical and social environment.

They are intelligent, playful and agile. They are often more active dusk and dawn when their prey is also active, whilst spending long periods of the day resting.

Cats have a complex and flexible social life – they live in groups of related individuals when resources allow. Related females may live in colonies, sharing the care of their kittens. Males may also provide care for related young, but they often live a solitary life on the periphery, occupying larger territories that overlap with several female colonies.

Cats prefer to be with familiar (often related) individuals, over strangers; their friendly behaviour towards one another is evident during grooming or rubbing against one another; familiar and socially bonded cats may often be found resting, sleeping and playing together. However, cats are frequently aggressive towards unfamiliar individuals that enter their territory.

Cats communicate using visual (body postures, facial expressions, tail carriage) and chemical signals (transmitted through urine, faeces, scratching and rubbing); they have a wide range of calls and sounds that provide information on their emotional state. These modes of communication help to moderate their social interactions.

(Bradshaw et al 2012; Turner & Bateson 2013)

**These guidelines should be read in conjunction with:**

**Supplementary Guidance for Responsible Breeders: Early Socialisation and Habituation of Kittens (to follow)**

**Guidelines on Commercial Movement of Cats and Dogs ([https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/welfare/eu-platform-animal-welfare/platform\\_conclusions\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/welfare/eu-platform-animal-welfare/platform_conclusions_en))**

**Guidelines for Online Platforms Selling Dogs ([https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/welfare/eu-platform-animal-welfare/platform\\_conclusions\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/welfare/eu-platform-animal-welfare/platform_conclusions_en))**

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Animal Welfare Unit, Government of Flanders, Belgium  
Animal Welfare Unit, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food of Spain  
Animal Welfare Unit, Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, Netherlands  
Animal Welfare Unit, Public Service of Wallonia, Belgium  
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Eurogroup for Animals



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Ministry of Health-Izsm, Italy  
Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)  
State Veterinary and Food Administration of the Slovak Republic  
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### **Suggested review of the guidelines:**

To keep pace with the evidence-base that underpins best practice for responsible breeding and care of kittens and cats, the content of these guidelines should be reviewed in 3 years (2023) or earlier if necessary.



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### Definitions and terms used in these guidelines

<b>Accommodation</b>	The cat's housing, where it spends most of its time.
<b>Animal Welfare</b>	The physical and mental state of an animal in relation to the conditions in which it lives and dies (OIE 2019).
<b>Best Practice</b>	Evidence-based practices that demonstrate optimised animal welfare.
<b>Breeding</b>	Refers to either planned or unplanned breeding (mating and production of offspring), of pedigree and non-pedigree cats.
<b>Cat</b>	<i>Felis silvestris catus</i> . Domesticated member of the family Felidae (order Carnivora).
<b>Coefficient of Inbreeding</b>	A measure of the degree of inbreeding – how closely related the parents are.
<b>Compassion</b>	Described as ' <b><i>the emotion a person experiences when they feel concern for another's suffering coupled with a desire to alleviate their suffering and enhance their welfare</i></b> ' (Goetz et al 2010).
<b>Competent</b>	Defined as ' <b><i>having the necessary ability, knowledge and skill to do something successfully</i></b> ' (Oxford Dictionary of English 2003).
<b>Competent Authority</b>	The central authority of a member state, competent to carry out controls on breeding or any authority to which it has delegated that competence.
<b>Conformation/ Extreme conformation</b>	The shape and structure of the body. Extremes of conformation, defined ' <b><i>as when an animal's body shape, structure, or appearance has the potential to result in negative impacts on their health and welfare</i></b> ' (British Veterinary Association 2018, p1).
<b>Domestic Environment</b>	<b>Home</b> A household where both the cat and its' owner/keeper live.
<b>Duty of Care</b>	A moral or legal obligation to ensure the safety and well-being of others (people or animals).
<b>Dystocia</b>	Difficulty giving birth.
<b>Good Practice</b>	Practices that ensure compliance with requirements of legislation or regulations designed to protect the animals' welfare.
<b>Hybrid</b>	<a href="#">The offspring of two different species or sub-species</a> (e.g. interbreeding between a domestic cat and a wild feline species).
<b>Inbreeding</b>	Breeding from closely related cats such as brother and sister, mother and son or father and daughter, grandfather, and granddaughter.
<b>Kittening</b>	The process of the queen giving birth.
<b>Kittening Box</b>	Place provided for the queen to give birth.
<b>Lactation</b>	Milk production from the mammary glands.
<b>Non-pedigree cat</b>	<a href="#">A cat or kitten of no specific breed.</a>
<b>Pedigree cat</b>	<a href="#">A cat or kitten bred specifically to exhibit particular physical characteristics, often whose parents are from specific breeds and whose ancestry is documented in a 'pedigree' document.</a>
<b>Pica</b>	<a href="#">Broadly characterised as chewing, sucking or ingesting non-nutritive items.</a>
<b>Popular Sire Effect</b>	Refers to the widespread use of a particular male to sire many litters leading to reduced genetic diversity in a breed and increasing the probability of deleterious inherited disorders (Farell et al 2015).
<b>Quality of Life</b>	Simply defined as ' <b><i>an individual's satisfaction with its welfare</i></b> ' (Belshaw 2017, p9). Defined operationally as ' <b><i>an individual's satisfaction with its physical and psychological health, its physical and social environment and its ability to interact with that environment</i></b> ' (Belshaw et al 2015, p204).

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<b>Queen</b>	An entire (intact) female cat used for breeding. Pedigree queens are likely to be registered with the governing cat association.
<b>Retired Cat</b>	A cat that is no longer used for breeding.
<b>Stud Cat</b>	An entire (intact) male cat retained for breeding. Pedigree studs are likely to be registered with the governing cat association.
<b>Third Party</b>	A party who has not bred the kitten but sells or transfers the kitten.
<b>Veterinarian</b>	A veterinarian that is suitably qualified and licensed to practice medicine and surgery registered by a competent authority.

### 1. Introduction

Poor breeding practices have profoundly detrimental effects on cat welfare and on the well-being of owners; the consequences of poor breeding practices may lead to a lifetime of suffering, through poor health and poor suitability as pets, resulting in an untimely death, abandonment or relinquishment. Breeders, legislators, competent authorities, veterinarians, and owners have an ethical responsibility to work together to ensure cats live a good quality of life.

Cats and kittens have the same need to live a good quality of life regardless of breeding context and all breeders<sup>1</sup> are required to act responsibly and with compassion to meet those needs. These guidelines are intended to support the enforcement of responsible breeding and good animal welfare practices by competent authorities. Where national legislation in a country sets higher criteria than those outlined in these guidelines, the national legislation should take precedence.

Research into animal welfare and breed-specific predispositions to disease that inform responsible breeding practices are ongoing; breeders and competent authorities should follow current best practices where these exceed the guidelines. This requires both breeders and competent authorities to regularly update their knowledge of cat welfare.

Animal welfare is a state within the animal that ranges from poor-through-to-good (Broom 1996). For example, poor welfare arises when a cat is sick or injured or unable to express natural behaviours it is highly motivated to perform; it is associated with negative emotions such as fear, distress, frustration, or boredom. Good welfare results when cats' experience positive physical and mental states (Green & Mellor 2011; Mellor 2016), they are thriving – they are physically healthy, and living in a complex and interesting environment where they have choice over what they do and when they do things; they feel comfortable and secure; they have access to all necessary resources. Cats experience a good quality of life when they are thriving.

Breeders have a duty of care, to keep all cats in a state of good welfare, to ensure kittens have a good start in life – they are functionally fit, healthy and socialised – they fulfil their potential to live a good quality of life in their new homes. Breeders are obliged to find responsible homes for kittens they have bred; ensuring new owners are a good match and understand their lifelong duty of care to their new cat.

### 2. Principles of responsible breeding

A responsible cat breeder (adapted from RSPCA Australia 2018):

#### Respects the intrinsic value of cats

- Demonstrates a genuine concern for the welfare of cats and their future generations. Avoids breeding from banned breeds and their hybrids, animals that are closely related, or with

<sup>1</sup> Regardless of whether breeding is planned or accidental, cats and kittens should be cared for in the same way to protect and promote their welfare. The guidelines apply whether kittens are sold or transferred without a fee to a new owner.

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inherited disorders, or exaggerated features that compromise welfare. Avoids breeding cats with temperaments that may produce kittens that will be unsuitable pets (e.g. reactive, fearful, or aggressive towards people or other animals).

### **Plans breeding and conscientiously matches kittens with new owners who will be responsible and understand their lifelong duty of care towards their cat**

- Ensures they can find compatible and suitable homes with responsible owners before breeding.

### **Optimises cat welfare by providing high standards of housing, husbandry and care that meet the physical and behavioural needs of individual cats and kittens**

- Houses and cares for all cats and kittens in a way that protects and promotes their welfare, and ensures they experience a good quality of life.
- Ensures that the early experiences of kittens are positive and extensive and shapes their development to be suitable pets for responsible owners.
- Takes responsibility for the lifetime care and welfare of cats they no longer breed from, neutering them, and keeping them as pets or finding them suitable new homes for their retirement.

### **Demonstrates competency, knowledge of, and a genuine concern for the welfare of the cats and kittens under their care**

- Through their continued learning, knowledge, and actions, ensure the highest standards of care are provided for their cats and kittens.

### **Must not sell kittens that they have not bred and reared on their premises and must not sell or transfer kittens to third parties**

- Recognises the vulnerability of kittens and does not sell or transfer kittens before they are 12 weeks old and certainly not less than 8 weeks old (see page 22).
- Does not act as a third party or use a third party for sale or transfer of kittens because it is detrimental to kitten welfare. Kittens sold via a third party are more likely to experience poorer welfare conditions such as early separation from the queen, additional journeys, and exposure to new environments, which increases the risk of development of behaviour problems and disease.

### **Is open and transparent**

- Keeps accurate records and can provide a complete lifetime history of the cat or kitten under their care.
- Shares the results of clinical examinations and genetic tests of parents.

### **Provides the new owner with information and support to help them meet the needs of kittens and cats to live a good life**

- Ensures the new owner is compatible with the individual animal and knowledgeable about the welfare needs of their new pet.
- Provides up-to-date appropriate information and support to the new owner (even after sale) to help promote kittens' and cats' quality of life.

### **Provides a warranty**

- Accepts a returned or unwanted animal within a specified time period, for reasons including problems with health, behaviour, compatibility or inability of the owner to provide suitable care.
- Proactively helps to find a more suitable new home for the returned cat.

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- Compensates the new owner for any reasonable veterinary costs associated with treatment of a congenital disorder suffered as a result of a breach of the warranty<sup>2</sup> (see page 24).
- Protects the statutory rights of the new owner; whether the animal was sold or given away for free.
- When applicable - registers cats and kittens sold or transferred without a fee as pedigrees according to the requirements and codes of practice of governing breed associations and provides new owners with accurate and official breed certificates.

### **Complies with relevant local, regional, and national legislation, codes of practice or animal welfare standards including any registration and licensing requirements**

- Demonstrates compliance with all local, regional, and national legislation, and their associated animal welfare standards.
- Exceeds the minimum standards by following best practice, even if that practice is not common in that country.
- Permanently identifies each kitten or cat using a microchip and registering the kitten or cat in the official or recognised database before transfer to the new owner.
- Ensures they (the breeder) are registered as the first owner of the animal, before completing registration to the new owner once the animal has been transferred.

## 3. Selection of parents

### 3.1 General considerations

- Cats must not be bred which are from breeds (including their hybrids) that are banned by national legislation.
- Cats used for breeding must be health-checked by a veterinarian before breeding; they should be functionally fit, physically healthy (in good body condition and free from obvious signs of infection) and have good (confident and friendly) temperaments – these phenotypes are compatible with a good quality of life.
- Breeders are required to know the specific welfare risks of extreme conformations and inherited disease related to breed or individual (Gough et al 2018). They should avoid breeding cats for extremes of physical type and minimise the extent of inbreeding (breeding from closely related individuals) which has the potential to be detrimental to the cat's quality of life.
- Where a cat produces kittens with an inherited disease, extreme physical conformations or behavioural characteristics that compromises their kittens' quality of life, this combination of parents, and their offspring must be excluded from future breeding.

### 3.2 Behavioural traits

*Cats' friendliness to people and ability to cope when meeting strangers later in life by their parents temperament; kittens from bold, friendly fathers are more confident and friendly towards people and cope better when faced with challenges of meeting strangers or with unfamiliar environments later in life (McCune 1995).*

- Breeding cats should be friendly towards people, comfortable with being handled and confident living in a home environment. Cats that are fearful or aggressive towards people should be excluded from breeding.

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<sup>2</sup> The terms of warranty may vary country-to-country and national legislation must be followed.

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### 3.3 Inherited disorders

**Avoid inbreeding:** *Breeding from closely related cats such as brother and sister, mother and son or father and daughter, grandfather and granddaughter, predispose kittens to genetic problems or birth defects. The breeder must avoid inbreeding.*

- **Inbreeding Coefficient.** Selective breeding of individuals should not be undertaken without knowing the genetic similarity between two parents over the highest number of generations (e.g. at least 5). Breeders should avoid breeding from individual cats that produce a high coefficient of inbreeding (greater than 20%; Governing Council of the Cat Fancy 2015), ideally this coefficient should be below 10% (Governing Council of the Cat Fancy 2017).
- **Popular Sire Effect.** The 'popular sire effect' reduces genetic diversity of breeds which often leads to deleterious consequences for many future generations (Gough et al 2018). Breeders should avoid overusing stud cats in the breeding population. As a general rule, cats should not sire more than 5% of the total kittens, in the specific pedigree population, during a 5-year period<sup>3</sup>.

*Use genetic Screening:* Breeders are required to use all available, validated screening tests relevant to the breed<sup>4</sup> and in conjunction with veterinary advice (Lyons 2010), before they choose to breed from a cat. Screening tests will identify 'carrier' cats that are unaffected by the disease but carry the mutated gene; breeding between two carrier cats should be avoided to prevent their kittens being affected. The results of genetic screening tests should be provided to prospective new owners of kittens.

**Avoid breeding for extremes:** *Cats may suffer as a result of extreme conformations, for example, Brachycephalism (being flat-faced), which produces anatomical defects to cats' skull affecting the brain, eyes and upper airway, predisposing individuals to life-long neurological and eye-related problems, and difficulties in breathing, sleeping (sleep apnoea), overheating and regurgitation (International Cat Care 2016).*

- Cats with extreme conformation<sup>5</sup> (or those who have had corrective surgery) must not be bred from (or presented in breeding exhibitions); the corrective surgery should be noted in the relevant health information alongside their microchip registration, and where appropriate health passport.

### 3.4 General health requirements

- Both stud and queen must receive prophylactic health care under the direction of a veterinarian, including regular vaccinations, thorough clinical examination, and treatment for internal and external parasites. The timing of treatments must be under veterinary direction as some may be harmful to the foetus if given during pregnancy or lactation.

#### Vaccination

Cats should be vaccinated by a veterinarian before mating; queens recently vaccinated before pregnancy will produce antibodies in colostrum (first milk) which will be passed on to kittens during nursing, conferring temporary immunity to specific diseases.

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<sup>3</sup> Further research is needed to understand the acceptable threshold for cats.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.langfordvets.co.uk/diagnostic-laboratories/services/cat-genetic-testing/>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.wir-sind-tierarzt.de/download/BTK\\_Flyer\\_Qualzucht-Katze.pdf](https://www.wir-sind-tierarzt.de/download/BTK_Flyer_Qualzucht-Katze.pdf)

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The availability of core and non-core vaccines (Table 1; Day et al 2016) for cats will vary country-to-country. Veterinarians should follow national guidelines on the vaccination requirements for cats.

**Table 1.** Core and non-core vaccines for cats (Day et al 2016; International Cat Care 2018a)

Core cat vaccines	Non-core cat vaccines <sup>6</sup>
Feline panleukopenia virus: FPV (feline infectious enteritis)	Feline leukaemia virus: FeLV
Feline herpesvirus: FHV-a (cat flu)	Chlamydomphila felis (bacterial conjunctivitis)
Feline calicivirus: FCV (cat flu)	Bordetella bronchiseptica (cat flu)
Rabies – in countries where rabies is endemic, when vaccination is mandated for cats, and if cats are travelling to another country.	Feline immunodeficiency virus: FIV

- For each cat and kitten, breeders are required to keep an up-to-date vaccination certificate signed by the veterinarian. Where appropriate this should be a national health certificate or European Pet Passport. Homeopathic vaccinations are not an acceptable alternative.
- Both parents should be screened for feline leukaemia (FeLV) and feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) by regular blood testing. The level of risk to breeding individuals should inform the regularity of testing. As a guide, queens should be tested prior to visiting studs, whereas stud cats are likely to require annual testing given their use with different queens.

### Breeding

- Both parents must be able to mate naturally. Forced matings must not take place.
- Artificial insemination must not be used as a default or to overcome problems due to the inability of the cats to mate naturally. It may *only* be considered under exceptional circumstances, and to do so requires strict justification:
  - Where its use can be demonstrated to lead to an improvement in the welfare of potential offspring by increasing the genetic variability of the breed, thereby reducing the incidence of harmful genetic mutations.
  - Both parents must have a previous history of breeding naturally (e.g. mating and giving birth without intervention); it must not be used to overcome physical inabilities of the parents.
  - Only manual collection methods can be used to collect semen; electroejaculation methods are not permitted.
  - Surgical artificial insemination is not permitted.
  - Semen collection and artificial insemination must only be performed by a suitably qualified, trained veterinarian, to ensure they are competent and practiced in the methods.
- Stud cats must only mate with one queen at any given time; queens must only mate with one stud cat during one oestrus cycle.

<sup>6</sup> Non-core vaccines are used to provide protection to individual cats that may be at risk of disease. This list is not intended to be exhaustive and will vary according to national veterinary guidance.



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- Breeding females should be good mothers - able to give birth and rear their kittens naturally (note this information may not be available for first-time queens). Queens that have had a caesarean section must not be bred from again unless a veterinarian certifies that it will not compromise the welfare of the queen to do so. Queens that have had two litters delivered by caesarean section must not be bred from again.

### Breeding age

- Queens and stud cats must not be used for breeding until they are fully grown (have reached sexual and skeletal maturity) - this age is breed-specific; some larger breeds mature much later. Ideally breeding should be delayed at least until cats reach 18 months of age and they should not be mated before 12 months of age.
- Queens over the age of 7 should not be bred unless certified as healthy by a veterinarian. Queens must not have more than 1 litter a year or more than 4 litters in her lifetime (*CFSG In prep*).
- Although stud cats can have a longer breeding life than queens, given they are frequently kept alone and in cattery-style pens, they should not be used after 6 years of age (*CFSG In prep*). Once retired they should be neutered and found a permanent home.

### Mating

- Introductions between queen and stud cat must be carefully planned and closely monitored to ensure both are protected from injury, escape or disease. Animals that are incompatible (due to physical size or behaviour) must not be mated. Mating that results in large kittens or large litter sizes may increase the risk of dystocia.
- Mating pairs should be physically separated from other animals and housed in accommodation large enough for two cats (Section 5.2). The queen needs a separate area away from the stud cat where she can access food, water, litter tray and a bed. The stud cat needs an easily accessible elevated perch or shelf for retreating away from the queen after mating.
- Following mating, breeders are required to carefully check both cats for signs of injury. Veterinary advice should be sought and followed if necessary. Stud accommodation will require thorough cleaning and disinfection before housing another visiting queen.

## 4. Competent human carers

The welfare of breeding cats and kittens is dependent upon the environment and care provided by humans.

- Breeders are required to demonstrate evidence of competency in the following areas:
  - Cat welfare – recognise the signs of poor and good welfare, and be able to take appropriate measures to prevent, reduce and mitigate suffering and promote animal welfare.
  - Disease control.
  - Up-to-date understanding of breed-related disorders (when appropriate)
  - Recognition and first aid treatment of sick animals.
  - Cat behaviour, early development and socialisation.
  - Welfare-centred cat handling and training.
  - Environmental enrichment.
  - Cleanliness and hygiene.

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- Feeding and food preparation.
- There must be enough competent adult human carers available during the day (and where necessary night) to care for cats and kittens according to the criteria in these guidelines ([Section 5](#)). As a guide, breeders should have at least 1 full time, suitably competent individual available during normal working hours, 7 days a week per 10 cats kept, but the effectiveness of this care staff-to-animal ratio should be clearly demonstrated in the delivery of animal care and should take into account the additional time required for adequate early habituation and socialisation of kittens when litters are present.
- Where breeders are licensed to care for higher numbers of cats and kittens, they should undertake a recognised cat-appropriate animal care qualification (if available in the country). They should also undertake regular continuing professional development training, including the use of online courses and literature to keep up-to-date with good animal care practices. Breeders must be required to demonstrate what training has been undertaken and how often it is completed.

### 5. Requirements for good animal welfare: *Good feeding, good housing, good health, and appropriate behaviour*

In this section of the guidelines, good animal welfare is considered in terms of four **welfare principles** (e.g. Welfare Quality): **good feeding, good housing, good health and appropriate behaviour**, which reflect the animal's underlying **welfare needs**. Each principle has suggested **criteria**<sup>7</sup> that breeders are required to meet to provide for the **welfare needs** of cats and kittens. The welfare of cats and kittens can be monitored to evaluate whether they are being kept in a state of good welfare.

**Table 2.** Animal welfare principles, their suggested criteria and welfare indicators.

Animal welfare principles	Criteria required to meet the welfare need of cats and kittens	When welfare needs are met	Monitoring cats and kittens
Good feeding (page 11)	Cats and kittens are properly fed and supplied with water to avoid prolonged hunger and thirst to meet their need for a suitable diet.	Cats and kittens are in ideal body condition and hydrated.	Regularly monitor food and water intake, body weight and body condition <sup>8</sup> .
Good housing (page 13)	Cats and kittens are housed in an environment that provides them with freedom of movement, physical comfort, and choice over access to resources without fear, risk of injury and illness to meet their need for a suitable environment.	Cats and kittens display natural locomotive behaviours and varied daily activity patterns; they are comfortable and relaxed when resting and sleeping, they are not too hot or too cold; they are physically healthy.	Regularly monitor the health, behaviour and activity of cats and kittens.
Good health (page 15)	Cats and kittens are cared for in such a way as to keep them in a state of good	Cats and kittens are free from physical injuries, disease, and pain.	Regularly monitor the health of cats and kittens

<sup>7</sup> Adapted from Welfare Quality © [Principles and Criteria of Good Animal Welfare](#).

<sup>8</sup> Body condition scoring guide: <https://wsava.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Cat-Body-Condition-Scoring-2017.pdf>

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	physical health, they are treated well in all circumstances by their care-takers to meet their need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.	Cats and kittens are not fearful of their caretakers.	and their behaviour towards their caretakers.
Appropriate behaviour (page 19)	Cats and kittens are provided with a complex and stimulating environment, and opportunities for positive human-animal interactions, that supports normal behavioural development and where appropriate company of their own kind to meet their need to perform appropriate behaviour.	The behaviour of cats and kittens indicates an optimised emotional state. Cats and kittens display natural and varied activity patterns, they are comfortable and confident in their surroundings, they positively respond to human and (other) animal interactions and they have choice over what and when they do things without fear or stress.	Regularly monitor the behaviour and activity of cats and kittens, including their interactions with people.

### 5.1 Good feeding

Breeders are required to:

#### [General]

- **Feed cats a high-quality complete diet appropriate to their individual needs (e.g. breed, activity levels, age and health or condition).**
  - Veterinarians or appropriately qualified and experienced animal nutritionists can provide advice on suitable diets for pregnant and lactating queens, and kittens.
- **Give *ad-libitum* access to water that is refreshed daily.**
- **Keep food and water fresh and uncontaminated.**
  - Store food in a hygienic location and in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions; in cool and dry places or refrigerated, as required.
  - Raw food should be used with caution and only where biosecurity methods are strictly followed, including safe storage and separate preparation areas, with hot and cold running water.
  - Store and present food away from the risk of vermin.
  - Prepare food in a hygienic location.
  - Remove uneaten wet food by the time of next feeding and replace uneaten dried food every 24 hours.
- **Introduce new foods gradually, following veterinary or the food manufacturers advice, to allow cats to adjust.**
- **Offer food and water in different receptacles (that are non-porous), one food and one water bowl for each cat, so that cats can eat and drink separately without sharing.**
  - Provide queens with food and water that is separate to her kittens.
- **Monitor food and water intake each day.**

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- Seek veterinary advice if adult cats do not eat for 24 hours or they do not drink, or they drink excessively, or they display pica. Veterinary advice is required sooner if there are specific concerns.
- Ensure cats that display significant unexplained weight loss or weight gain, or condition are examined by a veterinarian and treated as necessary.
- **Regularly monitor body weight and body condition<sup>9</sup> to ensure cats are receiving the correct nutrition.**

### [Adult cats]

- **Feed adult cats at least twice during the day, approximately 8 hours apart as appropriate to the needs of the individual unless instructed differently by a veterinarian.**

### [Pregnant and lactating queens]

***Pregnancy and lactation place increased energetic and nutritional demands on queens.***

- **Feed queens a high-quality diet that is appropriate to the stage of pregnancy and lactation, and body condition.**
  - *Ad-libitum* feeding with food formulated for kittens, until the kittens are weaned, should provide good nutrition for the queen. However, care must be taken not to over feed queens, as being overweight or obese may predispose them to birthing difficulties. Following weaning, the feeding level required will depend upon the queen's body condition.

### [Kittens]

***Maternal milk provides all the nutrients for kittens in the first three weeks of life. Colostrum (the first milk) contains antibodies that confers temporary immunity against some infectious diseases to kittens.***

- **Regularly monitor kittens to ensure they are getting enough milk and feeding well, and they are steadily gaining weight.**
  - Quietly observe the queen nursing her kittens to ensure they are feeding.
  - Weigh kittens shortly after birth (provided the queen is content for kittens to be handled), and then daily for the first two weeks of life; kittens can subsequently be weighed weekly until homing or up to 6 months of age. Body weights should be recorded.
  - Promptly seek veterinary advice if kittens do not feed properly or do not gain weight; their condition can deteriorate much faster than adult cats.
- **If the queen is unhealthy or she is unable to feed her kittens, provide supplementary feeding to kittens until weaning is completed.**
  - Use a milk formula and bottles specifically designed for kittens.
  - Seek veterinary advice and/or follow the manufacturers guidelines about quantity, frequency and temperature of the milk feed, and good hygiene practices.
  - Sterilise and dry bottles and teats after each use to prevent infection.

***Weaning is a gradual process whereby kittens are introduced to a solid diet and their dependence on the milk from the queen gradually reduces.***

<sup>9</sup> Body condition scoring guide: <https://wsava.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Cat-Body-Condition-Scoring-2017.pdf>

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- **Have a plan for weaning kittens and keep a record of transitional feeding, showing the day-by-day ratio of weaning onto a solid food.**
  - Gradually introduce and transition kittens to solid food. Weaning must not start before the kitten is capable of ingesting feed on its own, and not before 3 – 4 weeks of age; weaning is generally completed when the kitten reaches 6 – 8 weeks of age.
  - Provide a good quality kitten food, specifically formulated for weaning, and follow the manufacturer's instructions on quantity and frequency of feeding. Raw food must not be used for weaning kittens. As a minimum, kittens under 12 weeks of age must be fed at least 4 times daily.
  - Ensure kittens are eating the correct share of the feed provided, offering food in separate bowls where possible.
- **Offer water from a receptacle that is shallow enough to prevent injury or drowning, but large enough to hold enough water to allow all kittens to drink at the same time should they wish to do so.**

### Ideally:

- **Present food and water in different ways to enrich the lives of cats and kittens (Section 5.4) (Ellis et al 2013).**
  - Place food and water in multiple locations and at different heights so cats have choice and control over where and when they eat and drink.
  - Present food in ways that allow cats to follow natural feeding patterns – given the choice, cats prefer to eat more frequent meals throughout the day (Bradshaw et al 1992).
  - Part of the daily diet can be used for rewarding behaviour during interaction and training sessions with people.
  - Provide additional access to fresh drinking water in water fountains.

## 5.2 Good housing

### Breeders are required to provide the following conditions:

#### Light

*Cats require sufficient periods of daylight and darkness to follow their natural day/night activity patterns.*

- **Keep cats under natural lighting conditions.**
  - Natural daylight should be provided. Where artificial lighting sources are used, they must follow a light period equal to natural day length providing at least 10 – 12 hours of light and be of the same periodicity and intensity to natural daylight. Artificial lights must be switched off overnight to provide a period of darkness for a minimum of 8 hours.

#### Noise

- **Ensure cats and kittens are not exposed to excessive or continuous noise (including high frequency and ultrasound, and the sound of barking dogs).**

#### Ventilation

- **Ensure cats and kittens have adequate ventilation to avoid the build-up of airborne pathogens and to keep areas free of noxious odours and damp.**
  - Queens with their kittens must be kept draught free.

## RESPONSIBLE CAT BREEDING GUIDELINES

### Humidity

- **Ensure indoor accommodation for cats is kept at 55%  $\pm$ 10% relative humidity (McCune 2010; Home Office 2014).**

### Temperature

*Cats are tolerant of a wide range of ambient temperatures. Kittens require higher ambient temperatures until they can effectively thermoregulate independently.*

#### [General]

- **Ensure cats and kittens have access to a temperature gradient so they can choose areas that are cooler or warmer depending upon their needs.**
  - Check that cats and kittens are not too hot or too cold. If cats or kittens show signs of heat or cold intolerance, steps must be taken to ensure their welfare is protected.
- **Regularly check ambient temperatures to ensure the required temperature ranges are maintained:**
  - Temperatures should be recorded daily, using a maximum/minimum thermometer, placed at the height of the cat, and sited as close as possible to the main resting area.

#### [Adult cats]

- **Ensure indoor accommodation for adult cats is kept between 15 – 26°C.**
  - An optimal range lies between 18 - 21°C (van der Leij 2009).
  - Brachycephalic cats and those with extreme coat types require careful management as they have markedly different thermal-tolerances.

#### [Queens and kittens]

- **Ensure the kitting box is kept between 18 – 27°C.**
  - Newborn kittens require a higher ambient temperature for the first 21 days after birth since they are unable to thermoregulate independently.
  - Cats and kittens with different coat types will have different thermal-tolerances (e.g. long-haired cats and kittens will require lower temperatures in the kitting box than hairless cats and kittens).
  - Take care to ensure the area and kittens do not overheat. Additional heat sources must be used safely – they must not pose a burn or fire risk to cats or kittens or their accommodation.

### Accommodation

*The type, quality (what the space includes and whether it facilitates performance of natural behaviour) and size of space provided to cats are important for good cat welfare.*

#### Type of accommodation

- **Avoid housing cats long-term in cattery-style pens - it is more difficult to keep cats in a state of good welfare, and to socialise and habituate them to a home environment.**
  - Ensure breeding queens and kittens are familiar with a home environment and comfortable with humans and their activities.
  - Cats kept in a home should have access to at least one room that exceeds the minimum space allowance for cats. Cats must not be confined to an indoor cage or kennel unless for short periods due to ill health under veterinary advice.
  - Provide accommodation to stud cats that meets their welfare needs. Cattery-style outdoor pens are often restrictive and can be detrimental to cat welfare. Further guidance

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on the design and construction of outdoor cattery-style pens can be found in the Appendix.

- Cats must not be housed in pens that are tiered or stacked on top of one another.

### Quality of space

- **Provide kittens and cats with a physical environment that is enriched, complex and stimulating, and allows them to safely use three-dimensional space, and to perform natural behaviour.**
  - Provide cats with enough space to walk, run, play, turn around, stand, stand erect on hind legs, hold their tail erect, climb, jump from the floor and platforms/shelves and leap between elevated platforms, rest on elevated areas, lie down fully stretched out without touching another cat or walls.
  - Provide cats with a large physical space that can accommodate multiple different environmental resources (e.g. food, water, toileting areas, scratching areas, elevated perches, areas to rest and hide) separated (by at least 60 cm) in different locations.
  - In addition, adult cats can be provided with free access to outdoors.
  - Provide cats with access to elevated areas for sleeping and resting and multiple hiding places. Cats must be able to avoid seeing other cats and people if they choose to do so.
  - Provide cats with soft, warm, bedding materials that are easy to wash and disinfect.
  - Provide group living cats with additional space that permits them to access all environmental resources without sharing.

### Size

***A critical minimum space allowance has not been empirically determined for good cat welfare; however, the following minimum space allowance provides sufficient space to encompass the other recommendations of resource availability and spacing.***

- **Ensure cats are kept in accommodation that meets and preferably exceeds the following minimum space allowances:**
  - No less than 2.0m high and with a floor area of no less than 4.0m<sup>2</sup> <sup>10</sup>; no side shall be shorter than 2.0m, for each additional cat, the floor area must be increased by 2.0m<sup>2</sup> (Rochlitz 2002). Any raised perch or shelf area is in addition to the minimum floor area and must present minimal risk of falling.
  - Larger cat breeds will require additional space, and the floor area of their accommodation must be scaled up accordingly.
  - Breeders should provide a detailed floor plan which clearly states the layout and dimensions of animal accommodations.

### Litter trays

- **Provide at least one litter tray per cat plus one extra litter tray to indoor or confined cats. Cats with free access to outdoors may still prefer to use a litter tray indoors. A litter of kittens will require at least 2 litter trays.**
- **Site litter trays as far away as possible (at least 60cm) from resting and feeding areas; for cats that have access to more than one room in the household, litter trays should be placed in different rooms.**

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<sup>10</sup> Deutscher Tierschutzbund e.V. (2014) The minimum space allowance for 1 cat or a queen and her litter of kittens up to 4 months of age.

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- **Ensure litter trays are large enough to be used comfortably by cats.**
  - Provide litter trays that allow the cat to comfortably turn around (at least 1.5 times the length of the cat's body), with litter deep enough (at least 3 cm) to permit digging and raking activities for cats to cover their urine and faeces.

### Safety

- **Ensure all areas, equipment, furnishings and appliances to which cats and kittens have access are safe; they present minimal risks of injury, illness, and escape.**
  - Ensure all housing areas are constructed from materials that are robust, safe, durable, impermeable and they are kept in a good state of repair.
  - Ensure all internal surfaces are non-toxic to cats.
  - Ensure all surfaces, equipment and furnishings can be disinfected when appropriate.
  - Ensure floor surfaces are solid; slatted or wire mesh floors must not be used.

### Ideally:

- **Provide cats with large and interesting housing that allows them to choose where and when they spend their time (without sharing resources with other cats).**
  - A larger floor area of at least 8m<sup>2</sup> is preferable, with each additional cat, the floor area should be increased by 2.0 – 3.0m<sup>2</sup>.
  - Many cats prefer to defecate and urinate in different litter trays and would benefit from at least two litter trays to meet this preference.
  - Space should be designed from the cat's perspective and furnished with additional enrichment (Section 5.4) that they can use in private (and without sharing with other cats).
  - Cats should be able to move around freely and comfortably in their environment, without competition from other cats.

### 5.3 Good health

*Cats and kittens should be treated well in all circumstances by caretakers who promote good human-animal relationships with the cat/kitten's perspective as the focus of their interactions.*

### Breeders are required to:

#### Handling

- **Handle all cats and kittens with compassion (Brooke 2019) and appropriately (Rodan et al 2011); handling methods must be welfare-centred and must not cause suffering – pain, injury, fear or distress or pose an increased disease risk:**
  - Scruffing cats (picking up a cat by the skin 'scruff' on the back of the neck whilst their body is freely suspended) is stressful and painful for cats. This handling technique must not be used unless it is justified to provide urgent veterinary treatment, and only as a last resort when no other restraint is appropriate.
  - Aversive training methods<sup>11</sup> must never be used with cats and kittens.
  - People who care for cats must provide positive, consistent and predictable interactions with cats that are appropriate to the needs of the individual.
  - Cats must not be forced to interact with a person; they must have control over interactions and be able to avoid people should they wish to do so.

<sup>11</sup> Methods that apply an unpleasant stimulus to stop or prevent unwanted behaviour (e.g. shouting, physical force). These methods may cause cats and kittens pain, fear and anxiety, and reduce their welfare.

## RESPONSIBLE CAT BREEDING GUIDELINES

- **Perform husbandry with the minimum disturbance to cats and kittens.**

### Inspection of cats and kittens

- **Observe cats and kittens regularly throughout the day and as often as necessary to protect their welfare.**
  - Observe animals for signs of abnormal behaviour, ill health, injury, pain or suffering. Any abnormalities must be addressed, and advice provided by a veterinarian or certified animal behaviourist must be followed.
  - Be familiar with the normal signs of labour/birth (Cats Protection). Veterinary advice must be sought promptly if the queen seems distressed, and kitting is not progressing normally.
  - Check cats at the start and end of the working day, and frequently during the working day, as a guide every 4 hours. Do not leave cats or kittens alone for more than 8 hours overnight. Pregnant queens that are imminently due to give birth, queens giving birth, nursing queens and kittens that are not yet weaned, must be checked more frequently. Breeders must find a balance between too much interference (and risk the queen abandoning her kittens) vs. not being able to identify the queen and her kittens in distress. Video cameras may be used to remotely observe cats and kittens.
  - Check kittens shortly after birth (if the queen will allow). Keep a record of the queen's identification (microchip) number and the time of birth of each kitten; record the sex, weight, colour and identification of each kitten as soon as is practically possible. The mother may become protective of her kittens, resulting in aggression. Care should be taken when approaching and handling, and other animals should also be kept away.
  - Check cats and kittens regularly for ecto- and endo- parasites and keep animals clean and comfortable. Long-haired cats and kittens will require regular grooming.

### Surgical mutilations

Surgical mutilations, including declawing, of cats and kittens are not permitted unless it is deemed necessary and certified in writing by a veterinarian for medical purposes (FECAVA 2004). Neutering of cats (and ear tipping as a neutering mark, where necessary) is the only exception.

### Veterinary care

- **Ensure cats and kittens are under the care of a veterinarian<sup>12</sup> and follow an agreed health plan.**
  - Register cats and kittens with a veterinarian and ensure the contact details of the veterinarian and their out-of-hours provision is known in advance.
  - Follow a comprehensive and agreed-upon veterinary health plan, including regular vaccinations, appropriate treatment for internal and external parasites, and clinical examinations performed by a veterinarian. The veterinary health plan should take into account the suitability of the individual for breeding (see pages 8 – 9), and should be reviewed annually, ideally by an independent veterinarian.

### [Adult cats]

- Cats must be examined by a veterinarian at least once per year. Ideally, cats used for breeding should be examined by a veterinarian more frequently, at least twice per year and before mating.

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<sup>12</sup> British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) has published [Manual of canine and feline shelter medicine](#) (Dean et al 2018) which may be applicable to veterinarians caring for cats and kittens in breeding establishments.

## RESPONSIBLE CAT BREEDING GUIDELINES

- Ensure cats are routinely vaccinated by a veterinarian and keep a certified, up-to-date vaccination record that details the core (and none-core) vaccinations that have been given. Homeopathic vaccinations are not an acceptable alternative.

### [Queens and kittens]

- Treat queens and kittens for internal and external parasites at an appropriate age and interval, and with an appropriate drug as directed by a veterinarian. Veterinary advice must be carefully followed regarding the appropriate medication dosage, route of administration and intervals between treatments as inappropriate treatment can be harmful to kittens. Only licensed products should be used.
- Kittens must be examined a veterinarian before sale or homing or earlier if the queen or kittens are showing signs of illness. The health and welfare status of each animal should be certified in writing by a veterinarian before homing, identifying the animal by microchip number.
- Kittens must be vaccinated by a veterinarian. Kittens should be fully vaccinated before they are given access to the outside.
- Microchip and register kittens with the breeder's details before they are homed, as a permanent form of identification and to support traceability. Microchipping must be performed by a veterinarian or certified individual, and the transponder must comply with ISO standards 11784 and 11785. Ideally microchipping should occur before primary vaccination to ensure accurate identification of the individual.
- **Promptly seek and follow veterinary advice if there is any cause for concern over the animal's physical and mental state.**
  - Treatments must be followed and completed to the specifications given by the veterinarian.
  - Medication must be authorised for the individual cat or kitten by a veterinarian.
  - A record of treatment should be kept for each cat or kitten.
- **Use medicines responsibly and safely.**
  - Use medicines in accordance with the instructions of the veterinarian or manufacturer (where they are not prescribed medicines).
  - Store medicines safely and securely, and at the correct temperature.
  - Safely dispose of medicines, in accordance with the manufacturer or veterinarian instructions.

### Euthanasia

- **Only euthanise animals on welfare grounds as deemed necessary by a veterinarian.**
- Kittens should not be euthanised only because they do not meet a prescribed breed standard, or because they have a conformational defect that will not affect their welfare, or where the defect can be corrected without compromising welfare as advised by a veterinarian.
- It is unacceptable to euthanise cats or kittens because they cannot be sold.
- Retired breeding cats should not be euthanised only because they cannot fulfil their function as breeding cats anymore.
- **Euthanasia must be performed humanely and only by a veterinarian.**
- **Keep euthanasia records for each animal including the reason for euthanasia, date and the name of the veterinarian who performed it.**

### Cleaning and hygiene

*The need to keep cats and kittens in clean and hygienic environments should be balanced against the need of cats to feel secure in their territory. Cats deposit scent through facial and body rubbing,*

## RESPONSIBLE CAT BREEDING GUIDELINES

*scratching and urine marking, this creates a unique scent profile in their environment which helps them feel safe and secure. Over cleaning (frequent cleaning with disinfectant or strong-smelling products) will remove or mask these important scents from the cats' environment.*

- **Ensure good hygiene standards are maintained in cat and kitten accommodations.**
  - Inspect daily cat/kitten accommodations, and any furnishings, bedding, or equipment within it.
  - Keep accommodations, and any furnishings, bedding, or equipment within it clean, dry and parasite free. Only clean soiled areas and bedding when necessary in kitting accommodations – it is important to maintain the queens scent profile and avoid too much disturbance.
  - Cats must be removed from their enclosure whilst it is being 'wet' cleaned (e.g. power hosing) or disinfected.
- **Clean areas in the cat's accommodation on rotation to ensure that the cat's scent profile is least disrupted.**
  - Take care to avoid using scented products that disrupt the cat's scent profile in their accommodation.
  - Avoid, where possible, cleaning areas that have been facially marked and scratched by the cat.
  - Wash, clean and disinfect bedding and toys when needed and on rotation.
  - Perform effective daily spot cleaning.
- **Avoid routinely removing cats and kittens from their accommodations whilst they are being cleaned, unless it is absolutely necessary for the welfare of the cat.**
- **Thoroughly clean and disinfect accommodation, and any equipment, furnishings, or enrichment items, between different cats.**
- **Clean food and drink receptacles daily and disinfect weekly.**
- **Keep food preparation areas clean and free from dirt and dust.**
- **Undertake measures that minimise the risks from rodents, insects and other pests.**
- **Provide cats with clean litter that is suitably absorbent, non-toxic, unscented and that is acceptable to, and used by cats.**
  - Replace litter, and clean litter trays at least daily; safely dispose of the contents away from food storage and preparation areas.
  - Use gloves or frequently, and thoroughly wash hands after handling cat litter trays. Pregnant women or immunocompromised individuals should avoid handling cat litter (Lappin et al 2019).
  - Ensure litter trays are impermeable, easy to clean and disinfect; regularly disinfect litter trays (at least weekly).
- **Safely use cleaning and disinfection products.**
  - Use products that are non-toxic to cats and the environment.
  - Phenolic disinfectants must not be used.
  - Avoid using cleaning products containing Benzalkonium Chloride, high concentrations are toxic to cats.
  - Only give cats access to cleaned areas once they are fully dry.
  - Safely store and dispose of cleaning products away from cats.

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- **Facilities must be provided for the proper collection, storage and disposal of waste. Special arrangements must be made for handling hazardous waste according to the legislation in each country.**

### Isolation facilities

- **Ensure appropriate isolation, in self-contained facilities are available for the care of sick, injured or potentially infectious animals (including quarantining new, incoming animals).**
  - Short-term isolation facilities may be provided offsite by an attending veterinary practice, for very sick animals (the veterinary practice must be able to provide 24-hour veterinary care).
  - Site isolation facilities at least 5m away from other cats to reduce the risk of airborne infection being carried between isolated and healthy cats.
  - Ensure housing and care requirements outlined elsewhere in the guidance are followed for cats and kittens in isolation to protect their welfare.
  - Ensure separate feed and water receptacles, litter trays, litter, cat transport basket, bedding, cleaning utensils and cleaning products are used for animals in isolation.
  - Follow good hygiene and biosecurity practices:
    - When appropriate, use protective clothing and equipment for use *only* in the isolation facility.
    - Have a separate caretaker for isolated cats or care for cats in isolation after all other cats have been attended to.
    - Wash hands and use an appropriate disinfectant after leaving isolation and before handling other cats.
    - Completely disinfect isolation and equipment once it is vacated.
- **Plan an appropriate quarantine when introducing new cats. Veterinary advice should be sought on quarantine plans.**
- **Ensure cats imported from abroad undergo appropriate health testing by a veterinarian and the results are known before being introduced to other cats.**

### Emergency planning

- **Always have a fully stocked and maintained first aid kit suitable for use on cats and kittens available and accessible. A veterinarian should be consulted regarding the contents of the first aid kit.**
- **Have a practical and usable emergency evacuation and contingency plan in place that can protect and accommodate all cats and kittens, and people who care for them.**

## 5.4 Appropriate behaviour

*An enriched environment increases opportunities for cats and kittens to perform species-typical behaviour (including social interactions with other cats and with humans), and helps give them control over their surroundings, optimising their physical and mental states (Ellis 2009; Ellis et al 2013).*

### Breeders are required to:

#### Meet cats' environmental needs:

- **Provide an enriched environment for cats and kittens that meets their needs.**
  - An enrichment programme should clearly set out how it meets the behavioural needs of cats and kittens.
  - Enrichment should pose little risk of injury or illness to cats and kittens.

## RESPONSIBLE CAT BREEDING GUIDELINES

- The effectiveness and safety of enrichment should be regularly evaluated.

Using the five pillars of environmental needs<sup>13</sup> framework (Ellis et al 2013) as a guide, breeders are required to provide cats and kittens with:

### **Pillar 1: a safe place – to enable cats and kittens to rest and retreat, where they feel comfortable, secure, and protected.**

- Each cat must have somewhere that is private, secure and raised off the floor (at different heights) to hide from other cats and people and to view neighbouring cats and people outside of their accommodation should they wish to do so. Cats must have constant access to hiding places in indoor and outdoor accommodation:
  - Perches and shelves must be wide enough and long enough to comfortably accommodate the cat, allowing them to lie fully stretched out.
  - Cats must be able to safely use vertical space. Kittens and older cats with limited mobility, should be provided with hiding places at a safe and accessible height, that pose minimal risk of falling. Provide additional ramps or steps if needed.
  - Place soft bedding on perches and shelving to provide cats with comfort.

### **Pillar 2: multiple and separated environmental resources for drinking, feeding, urinating, defecating, scratching, playing, resting, and sleeping, that cats can freely access so they have choice over what they do and when they do it.**

- Provide cats with at least two areas for eating and drinking, toileting, scratching, playing, and resting. Cats should have choice over what they do and when they do things; they should not be forced to share resources with other cats.
  - Provide cats with multiple sturdy scratching areas in indoor and outdoor accommodation, that meet their preferences for (i) scratching substrate (e.g. carpet, rope, wood or cardboard etc), (ii) orientation (vertical or horizontal surfaces), and (iii) type (e.g. tall structures<sup>14</sup> with more than one accessible level) (Wilson et al 2016; International Cat Care 2019a).

### **Pillar 3: opportunities to perform predatory-play-behaviour sequences to fulfil their strong instincts to hunt.**

- Provide cats with opportunities (e.g. appropriate toys, interactive play with humans and outdoor access) to perform natural hunting sequences.
  - Cats and kittens rapidly habituate to toys; using toys in rotation and in combination with interactive play sessions will help to maintain their interest.
  - Cats and kittens benefit from interactive toys that allow them to perform different predatory-play-behaviour sequences - *locating-stalking-chasing-pouncing-(pseudo)killing*. To prevent injury, the handler should avoid using their hands or feet as targets for predatory-play-behaviour. Cats and kittens must not be left alone with interactive toys that contain string or other parts that can be ingested.
  - Providing cats and kittens with puzzle feeders and scatter feeding (dried kibble), actively encourages natural hunting behaviours and feeding patterns (e.g. small, frequent meals).
  - Toys must be non-toxic and indestructible; they must be size appropriate to prevent injury (particularly to kittens) and must be checked at least daily, to ensure they are safe.

<sup>13</sup> Environmental needs include those relating to the cat's physical surroundings and those affecting social interactions with humans (Ellis et al 2013).

<sup>14</sup> At least the equivalent height of the cat at full stretch.

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### **Pillar 4: positive, consistent, predictable human-cat social interactions (that cats' have control over).**

- Regularly interact with cats, that are comfortable around people; interaction should be friendly, predictable, frequent and under the cat's control:
  - Provide cats with daily opportunities for additional interaction with people, lasting at least 10 minutes, 3 times a day, spaced throughout the working day.
  - Do not force cats to interact; they should be able to move away from people if they choose to do so.
- Kittens must receive regular, consistent, and positive handling by people from a young age (see Section: early experience and socialisation).

### **Pillar 5: an environment that respects the importance of their sense of smell so that they feel comfortable and secure.**

- Respect the scent profile of cats. Cats deposit scent via facial rubbing and scratching; this form of chemical communication helps cats to:
  - establish boundaries of their core living area where they feel safe and secure;
  - identify familiar and unfamiliar animals;
  - manage their interactions with other animals and people;
  - locate food.
- Provide cats with scratching areas that allow them to deposit scent through glands in their feet.
- Avoid over cleaning areas that have been facially marked and scratched by the cat (see: Section 5.3 – for advice on cleaning and hygiene).

### **Promptly address behavioural problems**

- **Seek and follow advice from a certified veterinary behaviourist or an applied animal behaviourist to promptly address any behavioural problems, should they arise.**

### **Social interaction with other cats**

*Cats have a variable social system (Bradshaw et al 2012; Turner & Bateson 2013). Many cats find the presence of other cats stressful and they often show aggression towards strangers. Whilst these cats are happier living alone, some cats can live with preferred companions (often those they have grown up with), provided that their environmental needs are met (Ellis et al 2013). Compatible cats show affection towards one another – resting together, allogrooming<sup>15</sup>, playing with one another and allorubbing<sup>16</sup> (Ellis et al 2013). These friendly behaviours are likely to be associated with positive welfare states.*

- **Cats that cannot live with other cats should be housed alone, under conditions that meet their environmental needs.**
- **Provide compatible cats that are housed together with a well-designed space, so that they do not have to share environmental resources, and they can avoid one another if they wish to do so.**
  - Ensure preferred companions can rest or sleep together (as well as separately) should they wish, by providing multiple rest areas that are large enough to accommodate more than one cat.

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<sup>15</sup> Allogrooming: grooming one another.

<sup>16</sup> Allorubbing: rubbing up against one another.

## RESPONSIBLE CAT BREEDING GUIDELINES

- Carefully reintroduce cats back into their social group after periods of separation (e.g. a visit to the stud cat or the veterinarian); they must be closely observed for signs of fear or stress.

### Pregnancy and kittinging

*The behaviour of queens usually changes very little during pregnancy, until a couple of weeks before she is due to kitten, when she may become quieter and start to seek suitable kittinging sites. Queens often choose dark, quiet places to give birth (McCune 2010).*

- **Provide the queen with a quiet, safe area, away from other animals to give birth, 10 – 14 days before she is due to kitten<sup>17</sup>:**
  - Ensure the kittinging area contains all the environmental resources the queen needs until the kittens are homed. The sleeping area must be large enough to accommodate the queen at full stretch, as she nurses her kittens. The queen will need respite from her kittens as they grow and become more mobile, providing access to perches or shelves will allow her to retreat.
  - Ensure the kittinging area is accessible so that assistance can be provided in the event of an emergency.
  - Keep other animals away from the queen and her kittens for the first two weeks of life. Litters of kittens from different queens must not be housed together, unless queens are already housed in compatible social groups and their litters choose to mix.

### Early experience – habituation and socialisation

*For kittens to make happy confident pets, they must have positive, frequent and varied experiences with people, other animals and the domestic home environment early in life. Kittens are particularly sensitive to learning about these types of experiences when they are very young (aged between 2 – 9 weeks). Without the right type of experiences during this sensitive period, kittens may never be fully comfortable living as a pet cat. It is of critical importance that breeders take responsibility for positively shaping the early experience of kittens to prepare them for life in a home environment.*

**For detailed guidance, read: *Supplementary Guidance for Responsible Breeders: Early Socialisation and Habituation of Kittens* (LINK).**

- **Kittens must not be permanently separated from the queen before they are fully weaned and not before they are 8 weeks of age unless it is deemed necessary by a veterinarian.**
  - It is beneficial for welfare to keep kittens with their mothers until they are 12 weeks old; early separation (before 12 weeks) is associated with an increased risk of developing aggressive or stereotypic behaviour later in life (Ahola et al 2017; Berg et al 2018).
- **Have a socialisation and habituation plan<sup>18</sup> in place and dedicate additional time to ensure kittens are adequately exposed to the right experiences early on.**
  - The plan should be appropriate to the kitten's age, stage of behavioural development and individual needs.
- **Use appropriate infection control measures when introducing kittens to new experiences (see Section 5.3).**
- **Ensure that the queen and her kittens can cope with interactions.**

<sup>17</sup> Gestation period (pregnancy): typically, 63 days (range: 58 – 72 days, McCune 2010); queens should be moved into or provided with a kittinging area between days 49 – 53 of pregnancy.

<sup>18</sup> Cats Protection. Kitten Socialisation: <https://www.cats.org.uk/help-and-advice/pregnancy-and-kitten-care/kitten-socialisation>

## RESPONSIBLE CAT BREEDING GUIDELINES

- A positive and trusting relationship with the queen should be established prior to kitting, as this will facilitate socialisation and habituation of young kittens to people and the home. Kittens are more confident during socialisation and habituation in the presence of their littermates and the queen.
- Kittens can become overwhelmed when they are exposed to too many things too quickly. The behavioural response of the kitten should guide interactions. Start slowly and gradually allow kittens to interact at their own pace.
- **Seek veterinary advice on the welfare considerations and appropriateness of hand-rearing kittens** (International Cat Care 2018b).
  - Kittens must not be hand-reared unless it is deemed absolutely necessary, for example if the mother is unwell or unable to nurse.
  - Single or hand-reared kittens are disadvantaged because they lack opportunities for social learning from their siblings or their mother. This places them at risk of developing behavioural problems in later life (e.g. aggression, fear, anxiety) that demonstrate a reduced ability to cope with unfamiliar surroundings, making it difficult to find them permanent homes. The early experience of these kittens should be carefully planned to help mitigate for this deficit.
  - Kittens must be kept with other kittens in their litter or with kittens of a similar age.
- **Regularly and appropriately handle kittens to habituate them to different types of handling and to socialise them with people.**
  - Handle each kitten gently<sup>19</sup> for short periods of time initially, gradually increasing the duration and type of handling as the kitten ages. Handling should include stroking the kitten in preferred areas around the face, head and along the back. These positive interactions should be interspersed with picking the kitten up and examining its eyes, ears, feet and underneath the tail - the types of handling that are critical for providing good animal care in the future. Handling must not be prolonged if the kitten is distressed.
  - Young kittens (up to 2 weeks) should be handled by the breeder/main caretaker, and as they age, kittens should be gradually introduced to new people.
  - Kittens should be handled by at least 5 different types of people (International Cat Care 2019b), including adults (male and female) and children of different ages. Veterinary advice should be sought on the appropriate biosecurity measures to be followed by new people entering the facility during this time.
  - Handle each kitten frequently throughout the day. Kittens who receive total daily handling between 40 minutes - 2 hours a day are likely to become confident when handled; handling periods should be broken-down so that they occur little and often throughout the day.
- **Provide kittens with enough litter trays containing different types of litter, so that they do not develop strong preferences for a single litter type or inappropriate toileting substrates (e.g. carpet).**
- **Gradually habituate kittens to different textures, sounds and sights they are likely to encounter in households (e.g. appliances, televisions, washing machines and different surfaces on which to walk).**
  - Coupling these experiences with rewards such as food, stroking and play will help kittens form positive associations.
- **Gradually introduce kittens to a cat carrier prior to transport before homing**

<sup>19</sup> Kitten handling: <https://icatcare.org/advice/handling-kittens/>

## RESPONSIBLE CAT BREEDING GUIDELINES

- Provide kittens with repeated opportunities to explore and enter the cat carrier voluntarily (International Cat Care 2019c); place bedding impregnated with their familiar scent in the bottom of the carrier and encourage kittens to explore further by offering food inside the carrier.
- Slowly build-up positive associations with the cat carrier; kittens must be fully comfortable entering and resting in the carrier on their own before being fully enclosed.
- **Carefully introduce kittens to other animals (e.g. adult cats and dogs) if they share the same household.**
  - Supervise kittens during interactions with friendly, healthy, vaccinated animals in the same household.
- **Use a socialisation chart<sup>20</sup> to help to guide and keep track of what to do and when, so that kittens are adequately socialised.**

### Ideally:

- **Provide cats and kittens with an enriched environment that gives them choice and control of what and when they do things.**
- **Provide queens with a choice of kitting places that meet her preference for seclusion and shelter.**
- **Fully prepare kittens to cope as a pet in a human household by actively socialising kittens to many different people and habituate them to all the different kinds of experiences they will encounter in the home.**
- **Keep the queen with her kittens until 12 weeks of age.**

## 6. End of breeding life

### Breeders are required to:

- **To take life-long responsibility for caring for kittens that do not sell, and queens and studs that are no longer used for breeding or home them to a responsible owner. Cats that are no longer used for breeding should be neutered.**

The decision to euthanise a cat or kitten must be under the direction of a veterinarian and must only be taken for reasons of ill health or behaviour where the animal's quality of life is deemed to be poor and cannot be improved by veterinary treatment or behavioural intervention.

## 7. Record keeping

### Breeders are required to:

- **Keep accurate and complete records for cats and kittens. Records should provide a complete account of the cat or kitten's life history with the breeder, and include:**
  - Owner/breeder details**
    - Unique registration number
    - Name and address of where the cats or kittens are kept.
    - Name and address of the owner if this is different to the keeper.
  - Animal details**
    - Name and date of birth.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.cats.org.uk/media/1985/socialisation-chart.pdf>

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- Permanent identification number - cats should be permanently identified by a microchip before rehoming, both the microchip number and date of implant should be recorded. Cats and kittens should be registered to the breeder (as the first owner) on the official or recognised microchip database.
- Breed (or known breed cross) where appropriate.
- Sex, colour, and other distinguishing marks.
- If cats are registered with a breed association these numbers must also be recorded.
- Date of acquisition.
- Body weight.
- Date and reason for death (if not euthanised).

### Details of veterinary treatment

- All veterinary treatment, including regular clinical examination, vaccination, deworming and flea treatment, any other routine or emergency treatment received, any surgery to correct exaggerated conformations, date and reason for euthanasia and the name of the veterinarian who performed the euthanasia.

### Breeding information

- Results of all performed tests for inherited disorders and dates of the tests.
- Details of animals mated (as above).
- Date of mating and outcome.
- Date and time of kitting.
- Number of kittens born, sex, colour, distinguishing marks, weight and other significant events, identification.

### Rearing information

- Date and age of weaning.
- Outline of early rearing conditions and socialisation process. Include details of any periods spent isolated from mother and siblings, and reasons for isolation (e.g. disease, injury, treatment etc).

### Homing/sale details

- Cat/kitten identification.
- Cat/kitten age.
- Leaving date.
- Name and contact details of the new owner.
- Breeders/new owners must ensure that the kittens microchip number are registered to their new owners as required by national legislation.

### Licensed breeders, who care for several cats, should keep additional records of:

- All care and husbandry provided.
- All daily checks on the animals.
- Body weight and body condition score of cats and kittens on a monthly basis for cats and weekly for kittens (body weight should be checked against annual veterinary records kept for each cat/kitten).
- The oestrus dates of each queen.
- Studs – the number of visiting queens/queens visited, number of matings, number of successful pregnancies.
- The number of breeding queens and studs that are retired, their identification and fate after retirement (including rehoming details).
- Details of any isolation cases and the management regime in place.
- Specific information must be recorded for cats that have come from abroad in-line with animal health legislation (e.g. obligatory blood tests and vaccinations).

**All breeders should regularly review their records to inform breeding practices and ensure good welfare of cats and kittens.**



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### For new owners

**Provide new owners with a written copy of all relevant records of the cat or kitten, including:**

- Treatment records.
- Vaccination certificate (if the kitten has received vaccinations with the breeder) or European Pet Passport if this is appropriate.
- Veterinary health check results, including the results of health and genetic screening tests.
- Microchip certificate and instructions for changing ownership details on the register.
- Breed association registration certificate (when applicable).
- Five-generation pedigree information (when applicable).
- Details of the breed of each parent where different breeds have been crossed.

**Written information must also be provided on cat/kitten care:**

- The cat's/kitten's feeding regime.
- Cat litter type/preferences.
- Temporary health insurance in countries where this is available.
- Advice on habituation, training, and socialisation.
- Advice on integration into the new household.
- Advice on animal welfare needs.
- Contact details of the breeder – for advice and warranty.

The kitten checklist is a good example for breeders to follow to ensure information is provided to new owners.

## 8. Protecting the future welfare of kittens and their new owners

Breeders have an obligation to protect the future welfare of kittens by finding good homes with responsible owners.

**Breeders are required to:**

- Make reasonable efforts to ensure the new owner is a good match for their kittens; that the new owner understands and can meet the future welfare needs of the kitten and requirements for lifelong care. Breeders must not home a cat or kitten to anyone under the age of 18 years.
- Make reasonable efforts to ensure that the prospective new owner is not acting on behalf of a third party.
- Microchip and register each kitten or cat in the official or recognised database before homing. The breeder should be registered as the first owner of the kitten.
- Provide prospective new owners with accurate and comprehensive written information about the future welfare needs of the kitten in advance of the new owner's decision to take the kitten home. When applicable written information should include guidance about the welfare consequences of the results of parental genetic health screening, conformation issues and breed predispositions to disease/disorders.
- Provide information about neutering to prevent unwanted litters in the future.
- Provide a supply of the kitten's current diet to the new owner. Two weeks supply would allow gradual change over of food by the new owners if required.



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Prospective new owners are required to visit kittens with their biological mother, and littermates in the environment where they are kept.

The kitten checklist (The Cat Group 2019) can be used to help guide discussions between breeders and prospective new owners to ensure they understand the welfare needs of kittens.

### Warranty

- Breeders should provide new owners with a written warranty, about the kitten:
- The breeder warrants that the kitten:
  - is at least 8 weeks (preferably 12 weeks) of age when homed;
  - has received good care and been socialised;
  - is in good health unless otherwise stated;
  - is microchipped and registered in the official or recognised database.
- Where appropriate, the breeder warrants that the pedigree information/breed registration is correct.
- Assured breeders are required to demonstrate that they meet all the requirements of assured breeder schemes as outlined by the governing breed association.

The breeder warrants to reduce or avoid distress and inconvenience caused to the new owner in the event that the kitten suffers poor welfare as a result of poor breeding practices.

The breeder is required to use information about any health or behavioural issues of kittens/cats to inform future breeding, rearing and socialisation practices.

- The new owner warrants that:
  - they will take the kitten to their veterinarian soon after homing for a clinical examination and advice on preventative health treatments;
  - they will register their details as the new owner of the kitten in the official or recognised database;
  - they will be able to meet the kitten's future welfare needs based upon the information they have received from the breeder;
  - they are not purchasing or obtaining the kitten on behalf of a third party;
  - if they find themselves unable to provide for the welfare needs of the kitten, they will contact the breeder for advice including the option to return the kitten to the breeder.

The puppy contract<sup>21</sup> is a good example of a warranty agreement between new owners and breeders.

## 9. Registration, licensing, and enforcement

- Breeders are required to be accountable and responsible for their activities.
- Breeders should be subject to legal controls, recommendations appear below.
- Where legislation on cat breeding exists, the following refinements of definition and requirements are suggested:
- All breeders are required to register with the competent authority:

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<sup>21</sup> <https://puppycontract.org.uk/>

## RESPONSIBLE CAT BREEDING GUIDELINES

- A breeder is someone who owns or keeps at least 1 female or male breeding cat, whether the kittens they produce are sold or given away.
- The competent authority must make reasonable efforts to verify breeders comply with the requirements outlined in the guidance.
- All registered breeders must provide appropriate written evidence for authorisation by the competent authority to demonstrate that they comply with the requirements outlined in the guidance.
- Once authorised, a unique registration number must be supplied to the breeder.
- The competent authority must keep accurate records of breeder's registration details (including the date of first registration), and in-line with the requirements stipulated in Commission Delegated Regulation EU 2019/2035<sup>22</sup>).
- The competent authority must set a reasonable maximum time limit for the validity of registration, after which time the breeder must re-apply for registration.
- The breeder must notify the competent authority of any subsequent changes to the original registration.
- As a minimum, the information required for registration, must include:
  - Details of the owner and/or keeper breeding the cats.
  - Details of the cats.
  - An outline of cat and kitten housing, husbandry, care and veterinary provisions.
  - Details of breeding activities.
  - Details of responsibilities and competencies of human carers.
- Licensed breeders:
  - Require a licence from the competent authority if they breed more than 2 litters per year.
  - Breeders require inspection by the competent authority before a licence is granted for the first time.
  - The competent authority is required to set a reasonable maximum time limit for the validity of the licence, after which time the breeder must re-apply for a licence.
  - The breeder is required to notify the competent authority of any subsequent changes to the original conditions, for which they are licenced.
  - The licence must only be granted based on demonstration of the breeder meeting specified conditions.
  - The competent authority is required to keep accurate records of the licensing details for each breeder.
  - The breeder is required to keep detailed, accurate records for each animal under their care; records must be available for inspection at any time. Records must be kept for a minimum of three years after the animal is no longer under the care of the breeder
  - The total number (cats and kittens) and breed of cats kept on the premises must be clearly stated.
- All breeders must include their unique registration codes on all advertisements, and sale or transfer documentation, so that it is clearly visible to prospective new owners.

### Enforcement

- Competent authorities are responsible for enforcing legal breeding controls including registration and licensing of cat breeders.
- A key responsibility is to ensure breeders comply with conditions for registration and licensing; risk-based inspections should be undertaken to meet this responsibility.

<sup>22</sup> [Commission Delegated Regulation EU 2019/2035](#) Supplementing [Regulation \(EU\) 2016/429](#).



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- The competent authority will need to balance the requirement for inspection with available resources. Adopting risk-based control approaches, may enable an efficient use of resources, with targeted inspections of vulnerable animals or breeders that pose the greatest risk to cats and kittens. Complaints from citizens related to welfare concerns for cats and kittens and infringements of consumer rights should be included in risk-based approaches. Control points should be set and reviewed annually.
- During inspection reliance on provisioning of adequate resources to cats and kittens, will be insufficient to establish the welfare state of cats and kittens. Inspections should also include an evaluation of the cats and kittens themselves, to establish how they are faring under the breeder's care.



## RESPONSIBLE CAT BREEDING GUIDELINES

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## RESPONSIBLE CAT BREEDING GUIDELINES

### APPENDIX

For further information on topics covered in these guidelines, follow the links below:

#### Web-based resources on cat and kitten care

The following organisations produce resources on the care of cats and kittens

- [Cats Protection](#) – UK-based feline animal welfare charity: Advisory pages [\[here\]](#)
- [International Cat Care](#) – International advisory organisation for feline welfare: Advisory pages [\[here\]](#)
- [LICG](#) – A Dutch based advisory organisation, provides information for owners and professionals on pet care: Advisory pages [\[here\]](#)

#### Online courses - cat behaviour and welfare

- **Cats Protection:** Understanding cats' needs course [\[here\]](#)
- **International Cat Care:** Courses and webinars on cat behaviour and continuing professional development for veterinarians and animal care professionals [\[here\]](#)
- **University of Edinburgh** MOOC behaviour course: The truth about cats and dogs. [\[here\]](#)

**Guidelines** from the [American Association of Feline Practitioners](#) and [International Society on Feline Medicine](#), free to download guidance on feline welfare, handling and veterinary care [\[here\]](#).

#### Breeder codes of practice

The following organisations produce codes of practice for responsible cat breeders, and regularly publish advice on breeding-related welfare issues for cats:

- [The Governing Council of the Cat Fancy](#) – UK governing cat breeders association, produce guidance and educational materials for breeders (and owners).  
**Breeding policy:** Guidelines for healthy breeding: [\[here\]](#)  
**Code of ethics** for owners and breeders: [\[here\]](#)
- [International Cat Care](#) – International advisory body for cat owners, veterinary and animal care professionals, produces educational resources to inform on a range of cat health and welfare issues
- **Code of Practice on Cat Breeding.** CFSG 2020 Code of Practice on Cat Breeding [DRAFT no links yet]

#### Breeding and genetics

- **van der Waaij K** 2014 [Textbook Animal Breeding: Animal Breeding and Genetics for BSc students](#), The Netherlands. PDF textbook that provides teaching information on genetics and principles of animal breeding.

#### Extreme conformations and inherited disorders in cats

- **Gough A & Thomas A** 2004 [Breed predispositions to disease in dogs and cats](#). Blackwell Publishing. PDF book that provides information on genetics and breed predispositions to disease.
- **International Cat Care and British Veterinary Association** - Health over looks campaign [\[here\]](#)
- **International Cat Care** - Mounting evidence that flat faced breeds are suffering, extension paper [\[here\]](#)
- **International Cat Care** - New research provides further evidence on the suffering of cats with extremely flat faced, extension paper [\[here\]](#)
- [Federation of European Companion Animal Veterinary Associations](#) - Breeding for extreme conformations. What is the problem? Campaign flyer [\[here\]](#) further links to policies and campaigns across Europe about breeding for extreme conformations [\[here\]](#)



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- [German Veterinary Association](#) - Campaign on welfare impacts of breeding for extreme conformations in cats [\[here\]](#)
- [The Expertise Centre Genetics of Companion Animals](#), based in the Netherlands, undertakes research on heritable conditions in dogs and cats. Information is provided to owners and breeders [\[here\]](#) and share information with LICG [\[here\]](#).

### Housing, husbandry, and care of cats in homes, catteries and shelters

The publications listed below give detailed guidance on the housing requirements and care of cats in catteries, shelters and homes.

#### UK codes of practice and guidance on cat welfare in homes, catteries, and sales outlets

- DEFRA 2018 Code of practice for the welfare of cats. London, UK pp19 [\[here\]](#)
- DEFRA 2018 The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 Guidance notes for conditions for providing boarding for cats November 2018. London, UK, pp34 [\[here\]](#)
- DEFRA 2018 The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 Guidance notes for conditions for selling animals as pets November 2018. London, UK, pp92 [\[here\]](#)

### Caring for cats and kittens

Deutscher Tierschutzbund e.V. [Die Haltung von Katzen.](#)

### Feline zoonoses

Lappin M, Elston T, Evans L et al 2019 2019 AAFP Feline Zoonoses Guidelines. Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery 21(11): 1008 – 1021 [\[here\]](#)

### Biosecurity and infection control

Newbury E & Miller L 2018 Biosecurity in Shelters. In: R Dean, M Roberts & J Stavisky (Eds.) BSAVA Manual of Canine and Feline Shelter Medicine, British Small Animal Veterinary Association, UK, pp112 - 125. [\[here\]](#)

Dallas S, Jones M & Mullineaux E 2007 Managing clinical environments, equipment and materials. In: E Mullineaux & M Jones (Eds.) BSAVA Manual of Practical Veterinary Nursing. British Small Animal Veterinary Association, UK, pp76 - 85. [\[here\]](#)

### Recommendations on the housing requirements for cats based on their behavioural and welfare needs:

Rochlitz I 2015 Comfortable quarters for cats. In: C Liss, K Litwak, D Tilford & V Reinhardt (Eds.) Comfortable quarters for laboratory animals Tenth Edition. Animal Welfare Institute, Washington DC, USA, pp146 – 159 [\[here\]](#)

Rochlitz I 1999 Recommendations for the housing of cats in the home, in catteries and animal shelters, in laboratories and in veterinary surgeries. Journal of Felines Medicine and Surgery 1(3): 181 - 191 [\[here\]](#)

Stella J & Croney C 2016 Environmental Aspects of Domestic Cat Care and Management: Implications for Cat Welfare. The Scientific World Journal: 6296315 [\[here\]](#)

Wagner D, Hurley K & Stavisky J 2018 Shelter housing for cats: Principles of design for health, welfare and rehoming. Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery 20 (7): 635 - 642 [\[here\]](#)

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## RESPONSIBLE CAT BREEDING GUIDELINES

### Cat-friendly handling

**International Cat Care** have produced a series of cat interaction and handling videos for owners [\[here\]](#)

### Environmental enrichment for cats

**The publications listed below give information on environmental enrichment for cats**

Article on food puzzles for cats

**Dantas L, Delgado M, Johnson I & Buffington C** 2016 Food puzzles for cats: Feeding for physical and emotional wellbeing. *Journal of Feline Medicine & Surgery* 18 (9): 723 - 732. [\[here\]](#)

### Cat welfare assessment and indicators

**There is no singly accepted robust welfare assessment that has been developed for breeding cats. The resources given below outline approaches or indicators that may be adapted by competent authorities to assess cat welfare.**

Application of the quality of life concept to companion animals and a framework for developing quality of life assessments

**Yeates J & Main D** 2009 Assessment of companion animal quality of life in veterinary practice and research. *Journal of Small Animal Practice* 50 (6): 274 – 281 [\[here\]](#)

Book chapter giving an overview of welfare assessment and welfare indicators in cats

**Casey R & Bradshaw J** 2007 The Assessment of Welfare. In: I Rochlitz (Ed.) *The Welfare of Cats. Animal Welfare vol 3*. Springer, Dordrecht, Netherlands pp23 - 46 [\[here\]](#)

Application of behaviour and physical health measures in cats to assess welfare during quarantine on entry to a shelter

**Van der Leij WJR, Selman LDAM, Vernooij JCM & Vinke CM** 2019 The effect of a hiding box on stress levels and body weight in Dutch shelter cats; a randomized controlled trial. *PLoS ONE* 14(10): e0223492 [\[here\]](#)

Development of animal-based welfare surveillance system for use by inspectors of animal shelters

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