



## Supporting people and pets in Scotland

*...Looking after pets can be challenging - help us to understand those challenges so we can provide the best support ...*

### *The aims of the study*

The Scottish SPCA and Blue Cross are leading UK animal welfare charities who are joining together to provide better support for pet owners in Scotland. The aim of this study is to identify how the charities can help and who needs support. By providing support and services that meet pet owners' needs, the problems people experience will be reduced, and the stronger the human-animal bond will be, helping more pets and owners remain together. The study has been reviewed by the School of Health in Social Science (Clinical Psychology) Ethics Committee at the University of Edinburgh.

### *How can people take part in the study?*

Dr Janine Muldoon and Professor Jo Williams are working in partnership with the charities to carry out the research. The study will involve an online survey that can be completed on any device. No personal information that could identify individuals will be collected. Involvement is completely anonymous. *No one, including the Scottish SPCA and Blue Cross will know who has taken part.* If you decide to go ahead with the survey, you can still withdraw at any time without giving a reason. However, the information you have provided up to that point will still be used.

### *Who can take part in the survey?*

You need to be **at least 18-years-old and currently living in Scotland**. We would like to hear from current pet owners *and* those who had to give up a pet. In order to identify where support is needed most, we are especially keen to hear from those who:

- are experiencing challenges with their pet/s (no matter how significant or small they seem),
- feel like they are struggling to provide the best care for their animal/s on their own,
- are thinking about giving up a pet, or
- had to give up a pet (and had to rehome, leave them, or have them put to sleep).

If you know of anyone who falls into the categories above or may be struggling to cope, please tell them about this study. Perhaps they are unaware of support that is already out there, or reluctant to ask for help. These are the people we need to hear from most.

**Information on the study: [bit.ly/People-and-Pets-in-Scotland](https://bit.ly/People-and-Pets-in-Scotland)**

**At the end of the survey, there is an opportunity to enter a prize draw (taking place on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021) to win a £50 Amazon e-voucher.** You will be able to click on a link to provide your email address. This is optional and completely separate from the information you provide in the survey. Email addresses will not be used for any other purpose and will be deleted after a winner is contacted.

### *What questions will be asked and how long will it take?*

This study is designed to identify challenges people experience looking after pets, the reasons why pets are given up, what types of support and services are helpful, and if the need for support is greater among particular groups or areas in Scotland. Therefore, the survey asks questions about:

- your current pet/s if you have any (what they mean to you, how they might be causing concern, and the impact of any challenges you are experiencing),

- any pets you have had to give up (how long you had them, why you had to give them up, if you received any support to help you deal with challenges, and how you felt at the time),
- your living arrangements/personal characteristics (e.g. where you live, who you live with, your age/ethnicity/religion/gender identity, employment/benefits status, health/medical conditions),
- the type of support or services that would be most useful to you.

The survey will take 15-30 minutes to complete depending on how much information you want to share with us. The majority of questions ask you to simply select which option/s in a list apply to you. Others ask you to indicate your level of agreement. You can choose to type in more information where indicated. Many questions are optional, and you can withdraw from the study at any point.

*How will the information collected be stored and used?*

No personally identifiable data will be collected, so no one will know that you have taken part. The researchers will examine the information provided in the survey. A report will be produced for the Scottish SPCA/Blue Cross, and they will use the findings to identify priorities and outline the required support/services that need to be put in place. Survey data will be stored securely in Qualtrics (survey management system) and on the University of Edinburgh server for 10 years. The datafile will not be archived for use beyond this period. Papers will also be written for publication in academic journals, and a summary of the findings will be available on our website in August 2021.

**[Identifying optimal support for people and pets in Scotland | The University of Edinburgh](#)**

**Short link to website: [bit.ly/People-and-Pets-in-Scotland](https://bit.ly/People-and-Pets-in-Scotland)**

**Please download this document, take a screenshot of this page, or note down the short link above.**

*Where can more information be found?*

If you have any further questions, please contact Janine via email [janine.muldoon@ed.ac.uk](mailto:janine.muldoon@ed.ac.uk). Otherwise, if you are happy to take part, please access the survey through the link or QR code below. You will be asked to show that you understand the research and give your formal consent before the questions begin.

**Link to survey: [bit.ly/People-and-Pets](https://bit.ly/People-and-Pets)**



The independent contact for the research is Monja Knoll [monja.knoll@ed.ac.uk](mailto:monja.knoll@ed.ac.uk)

The contact for complaints is Matthias Schwannauer [headofschool.health@ed.ac.uk](mailto:headofschool.health@ed.ac.uk)

*Thank you so much for taking part - your involvement will help to transform the lives of people and pets living in Scotland*

