

Pets

# The 'We're all for pets' Report 2023

Insights into the nation's love of pets



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# We're all for pets

We're a nation mad about pets. We treat them like royalty, bake birthday cakes for them; we even get tattoos of them. They're not just family, they're the head of the family. Pets bring us so much joy and the occasional chewed slipper, but we wouldn't have it any other way. It's a love with no bounds, and no boundaries.

As the UK's leading and most trusted pet care provider, we understand this love better than anyone.

We are Pets. One destination for all your pet care needs, dedicated to making life better for pets and the people who love them.

Like our customers, we'll go to any lengths to keep pets happy and healthy. That's why in our 'We're all for pets' 2023 Report, we've explored the nation's love of pets further.

Working with independent insights agency Canvas8, we've studied what this powerful relationship means to people. We've looked at the ways we interact with our pets and the ways we interact with each other because of them. The things we do to show our love, and the things they give us that no human can.

We hope you enjoy reading this report. Our findings prove that, as a nation, we really will do anything and everything for our pets.

**Kathryn Imrie**  
Chief Consumer Officer  
Pets



# What we did

To prove we're all for pets, we:

**1** Interviewed three leading experts in pet ownership in the UK to reveal shifting trends and behaviours amongst pet owners:



**Professor Carri Westgarth**  
**Professor in Human-Animal Interaction, University of Liverpool**

Professor Carri Westgarth is an epidemiologist and one of the UK's leading academics in human-animal companionship and the author of multiple publications on this topic, including the book 'The Happy Dog Owner' (2021).



**Rachel Spencer**  
**Journalist, Pet Blogger and Media Consultant**

Rachel Spencer is the founder of The Paw Post — a widely-followed pet blog that has been named one of the best in the UK. She keeps a close watch on the latest trends in pet ownership in the UK, and provides an on-the-ground perspective on cultural shifts around these.



**Dr. Gudrun Ravetz MRCVS**  
**Veterinary Officer, Pets at Home Group Plc**

Dr. Gudrun Ravetz is past president of the Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons and a past president of the British Veterinary Association. She has worked in the industry for over 20 years and is passionate about pets, having spent her career advocating for the welfare of all animals.

**2** Conducted a survey of 2,060 pet owners across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to explore people's attitudes towards and experiences of pets in the UK.

**3** Carried out qualitative research with 10 pet owners to deep dive into their first-hand experience of owning and living with pets.



**4** Supplemented this knowledge with concepts, case studies and cultural artefacts from white paper reports, academic articles and social media.



# What we found

## Report summary

Whether it's bringing joy to the day-to-day or improving our self esteem, pets have a big impact on our lives. For many of us, they are an unparalleled source of support, with 53% of pet owners believing their pet understands them better than other people.

This is reflected in our relationships with pets; we treat our pets as part of the family and take a lot of pride in them — with nearly half of cat (46%) and dog (50%) owners saying that their pets are cuter than most babies.

They also impact our relationships with other people, from helping us forge new connections to strengthening ties with friends and family. 71% of pet owners say owning a pet has had a positive impact on their relationships with others. But our love of pets can also cause tensions — over half (56%) of pet owners believe if a partner didn't get along with their pet, it would be a problem.

And because they impact our well-being so profoundly, we'll go above and beyond to give them the best lives we can — 71% of pet owners say they would do anything to keep their pet happy. While 80% of owners attend to their pet's needs before their own as soon as they get home. 74% share their sofa or bed with their pets even if it makes them feel more uncomfortable, and 45% have cancelled social plans to spend time with their pets.

This dedication to the well-being of pets is even withstanding financial challenges during the cost of living crisis. Just take the two in five (38%) pet owners who say they're more likely to cut down on things for themselves to ensure their pet has the same quality of life.

Despite these challenges, 71% of pet owners feel happier because of their pets — showing pets ultimately transform our lives for the better.



# Pets make our lives better

## 1.1 Feeling good

### We believe pets make every day better

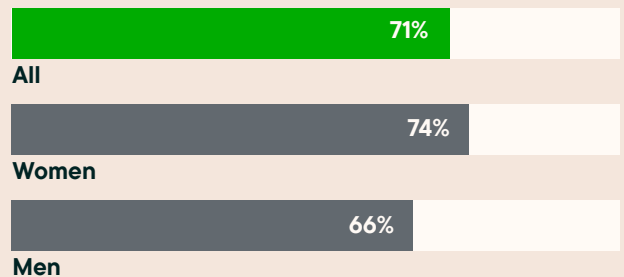
The top reason for getting a pet is the positive energy we believe they bring to our homes, and 85% of pet owners agree. Their tails wagging as we walk through the door, or a meow to say hello instantly brightens our day.

And on not-so-bright days, we love to cuddle pets because they bring us so much comfort, with 72% of pet owners citing this as a reason they got a pet. Academic research suggests this is driven by the sense of secure attachment that our pets provide us, which boosts our mental health.

Having an animal present in our lives can transform our well-being. Academic studies have shown that having a pet helps us to manage our feelings better. For example, they help combat low moods, with 56% of pet owners saying that they feel less depressed because of their pets, rising among retired people (67%), full-time students (63%) and people who have small furry animals (62%).

# 71%

of pet owners feel happier because of their pets



“

According to the psychology of attachment, we are programmed to attach ourselves to other people and beings. We also attach to pets as a consequence of our desire to fulfil our innate need to care and nurture.”

**Professor Carri Westgarth**  
 Professor in Human-Animal Interaction  
 University of Liverpool

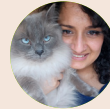


“Having somebody to care for, having the company of such a loving, beautiful dog has changed my life completely. I don’t feel as lonely. I feel like I have a purpose. I have to get out of my bed in the morning to walk her. It is a huge benefit to my life.”



**Elizabeth T.**  
Dalkeith, Scotland,  
dog owner

“My cats definitely do have a positive impact on my well-being. When I’m depressed or worried about something, they distract me. I’m quite fond of them, and when I look at them or when they are doing something mischievous, I actually get distracted and I forget what I was depressed about.”



**Amna B.**  
Stockton-on-Tees,  
England, cat owner



“

Pets are helping young professionals, perhaps those living on their own or single, to battle with loneliness. And with an ageing population and people living longer lives, a pet is a really great companion.”

**Rachel Spencer**  
Journalist  
Pet Blogger and Media Consultant



## 1.2 Our best selves

### Pets help us live our best lives

Pets impact how we feel about ourselves — many of us believe our pets makes us a better person. While over half (52%) of pet owners say they have become more compassionate since getting a pet, 46% say they've become more fun and 40% say they've become more confident.

Pets also help us build our interpersonal skills — two in five (39%) pet owners say their pets have helped them become more sociable. Beyond this, they also help enhance our approach to self-expression. Indeed, 32% of pet owners say they have become more creative since getting a pet, while 35% say they've become more interesting.

# 39%

of pet owners have become more **sociable** since getting a pet

# 35%

of pet owners have become more **interesting** since getting a pet

# 32%

of pet owners have become more **creative** since getting a pet



“

The bond we have with our pets is so unique. It's an unconditional love that can turn a bad day into a smile. It comes as no surprise that this bond makes us feel better about ourselves, as we can all recognise the boost of confidence we get on a happy day when we're cuddling the cat or walking the dog.”

**Dr. Gudrun Ravetz MRCVS**  
Veterinary Officer.  
Pets at Home Group Plc

# 54%

of pet owners feel more active as a result of having a pet



## 1.3 Unique bonds

We believe our pets can support us in ways no one else can

Pets offer us unique support, providing the emotional support we often can't get from other humans — even our friends and family. Over half of pet owners (53%) believe their pet understands them better than other people, while 65% say their pet can read their emotions. In academic literature, this connection has been coined as 'the pet effect', where companion animals become a key source of positive feelings for their owners.

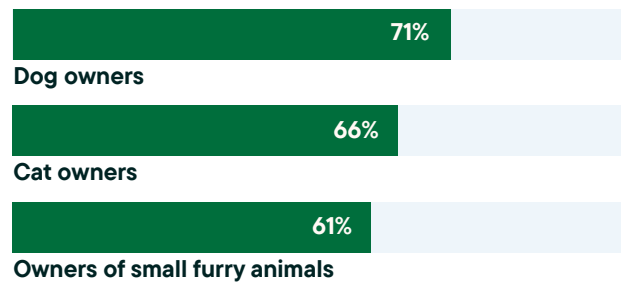
"I can give my children or my partner a cuddle, but it's not the same. When you're having a bad day, you know that you can sit on the sofa and have a cuddle with your dog and it hits a different note. Obviously, you can get emotional support from other people, but I personally don't think it's the same as having a connection with your dog or your pet."



**Ellie C.**  
Benfleet, England,  
dog and hamster owner

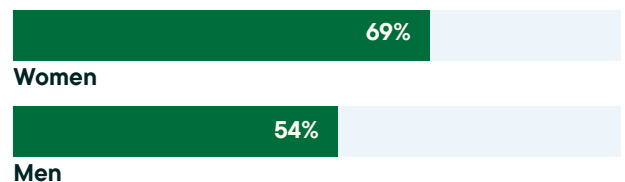
# 64%

of pet owners say their pet can tell when they're down and will try to cheer them up



# 63%

of pet owners say they would feel lost without their pet to support them

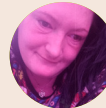


“Dogs are just brilliant because they’re your silent partner — they don’t make noise. They just cuddle you when you’re down in the dumps. And when you’re happy and excited — they are too.”



**Michael C.**  
Strabane, Northern Ireland,  
dog owner

“I don’t think I could get the same support from anyone else, as she (my cat) is so unique and so special to me. She brightens up my day, and only she can make me feel that way.”



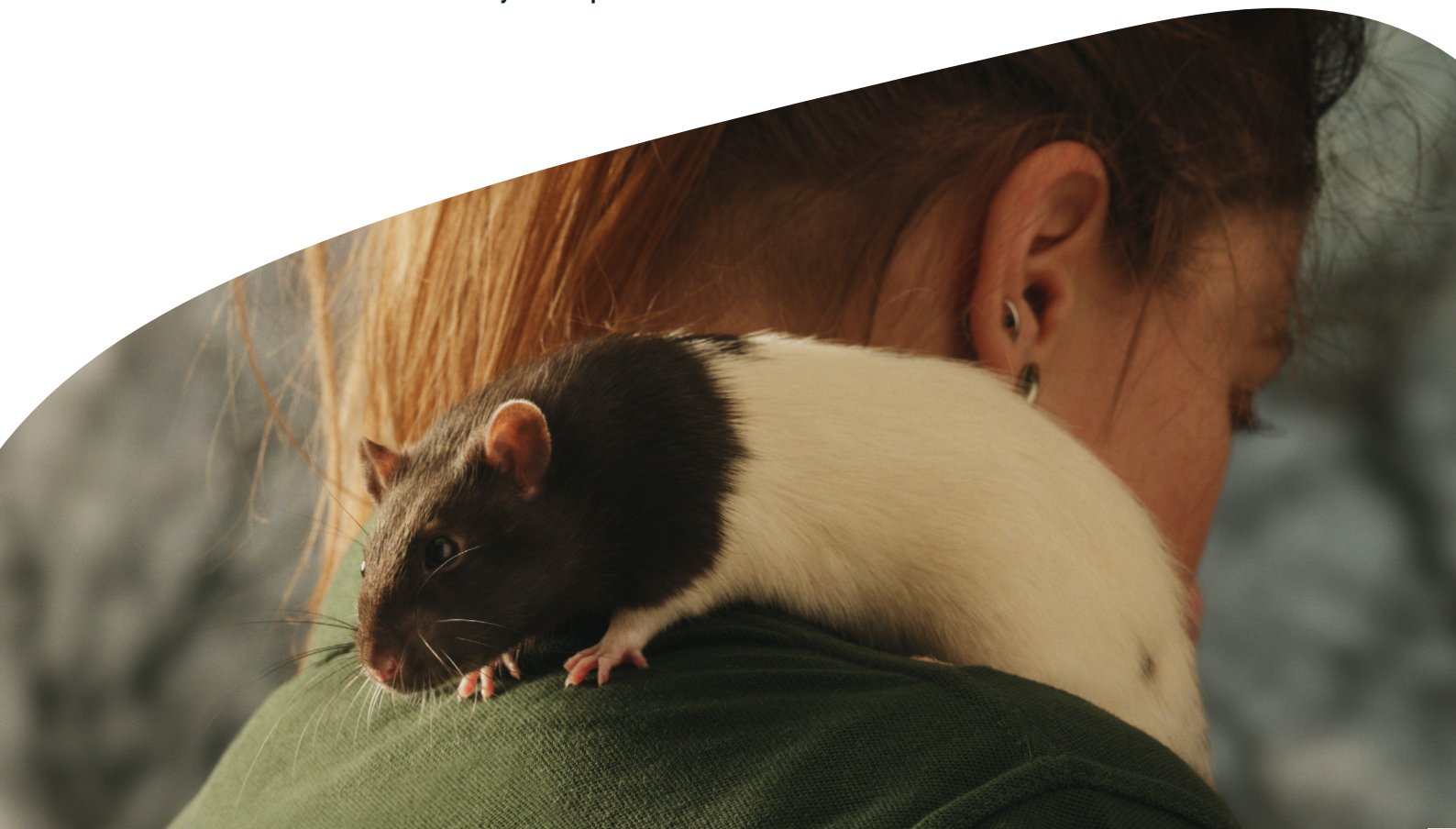
**Sarah L.**  
Merthyr Tydfil, Wales,  
cat owner



“

Interactions with our pets provide us with a sense of social connection with another being, and often a less judgmental one. They don’t care if you just upset someone at work — they still love you and if you’re having a bad day, they’re there.”

**Prof Carri Westgarth**  
Professor in Human-Animal Interaction  
University of Liverpool





# It's a love like no other

## 2.1 Shifting family structures

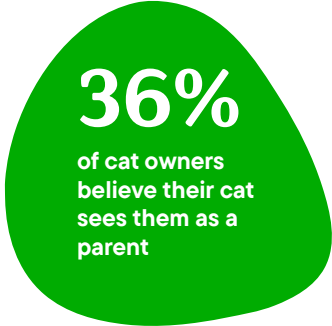
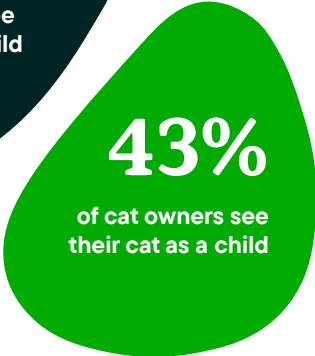
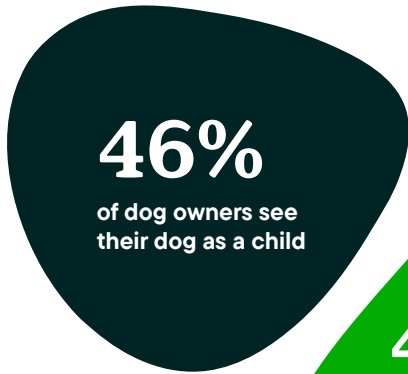
Pets are part of the family – we see them as our own children

For many of us, pets are more than just companions – they're part of the family. As people increasingly put off or choose not to have children, pets are fulfilling a desire for something to care for. While 41% of pet owners with no children at home say they got a pet because they prefer them to having children, 33% say they did so because they wanted to expand their family but weren't ready for children. In fact, over 2 in 5 of dog owners (48%) and cat owners (46%) without children see their pets as a child.

This matches with our beliefs about our pets' perceptions of us. Indeed, many of us believe our pets see us as a parent, with over a third of cat owners (37%) and dog owners (33%) who don't have children saying so.

Incorporating pets into our families can have many benefits. Academic research even suggests that the well-being benefits pets can bring to pet owners are enhanced if they view and treat them as family members.

Pets at Home understands this special bond and develops pet products inspired by trends in baby, nursery and kids' fashion. These adhere to the highest quality standards, giving pet parents extra reassurance that their new arrival will be happy, healthy and safe.



"Simba and Milo are both like kids in the house because we don't have any kids."



**Amna B.**  
Stockton-on-Tees,  
England, cat owner

"My cat to me is like my baby and I treat her like a baby by giving her lots of love and affection. Everyone in my household treats her like a baby by talking to her in a soft, babyish voice, and treating her like she is a part of the family. We always call her our baby cat."



**Sarah L.**  
Merthyr Tydfil, Wales,  
cat owner

"I would say my pet to me is some combination of a friend and a child because, as a dog, she's completely dependent on me for almost everything she needs in her life from food and medical care to exercise. I think we obviously care for each other, but I have a huge responsibility to take care of her and provide for all of her needs."



**David B.**  
Edinburgh, Scotland,  
dog owner



“

We've had the rise of the doggy day-care, which are now referred to as 'crèches'. So, we're using similar language we would for children when caring for our dogs. We have pet nannies. We also talk about dogs being with their friends and I've spoken to people who have bedrooms for their pets where their dog will have a bed.”

**Rachel Spencer**  
Journalist  
Pet Blogger and Media Consultant



## 2.2 Proud pet parents

### We believe our pets are the best and like to show off their looks and personalities

From their appearance to their nature, we take a lot of pride in our pets. This is seen in TikTok hashtags like 'proudpetparents', with over 800 thousand views of pets doing tricks, sharing a sofa with their owners or simply posing for the camera.

The Pets at Home VIP club runs monthly competitions inviting customers to share photos and insights into their love for their pets. These regularly get up to 30,000 contributions.

Followers of Pets at Home on social media channels also love to share photos of their pets, with many referring to their pets as their 'fur baby' — a term that now has a place in the Oxford Dictionary.

We are proud pet parents in every sense; over half (51%) of pet owners are convinced that their pets are better behaved other people's. And the top three pet attributes that pet owners are proud of are their personality, their friendliness and how affectionate they are.

In tune with people's perceptions of their pets as their children, half of dog owners (50%) and nearly half of cat owners (46%) also believe that their pets are cuter than most babies.

"My dog Hugo is very loyal and this makes me feel like he's always there. He's the most gentle dog I've ever known."



**Ellie C.**  
Benfleet, England, dog and hamster owner

"My wife is very active on Instagram and the dog features very heavily in her posts and has become a small-scale celebrity to her followers."



**Paul C.**  
Ballyclare, Northern Ireland, dog owner



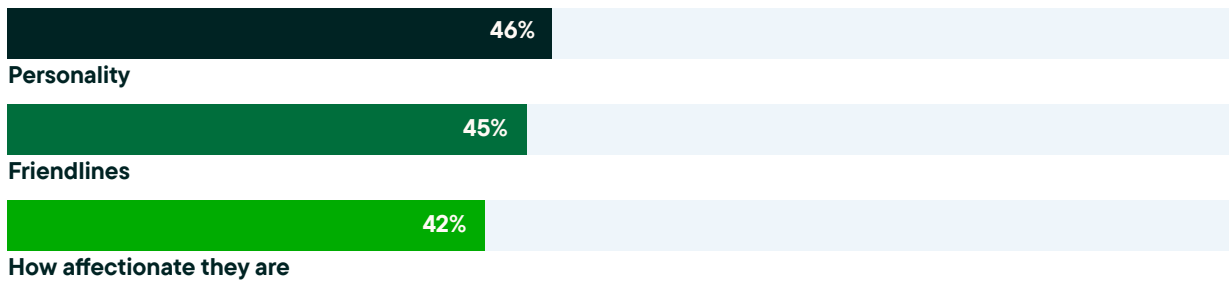
“

One reason owners want to turn their pets into 'petfluencers' may be that they love celebrating their pets. For example, their pets may be very well trained and they love the fact that their pets are bringing joy not just to themselves, but potentially millions of other people.”

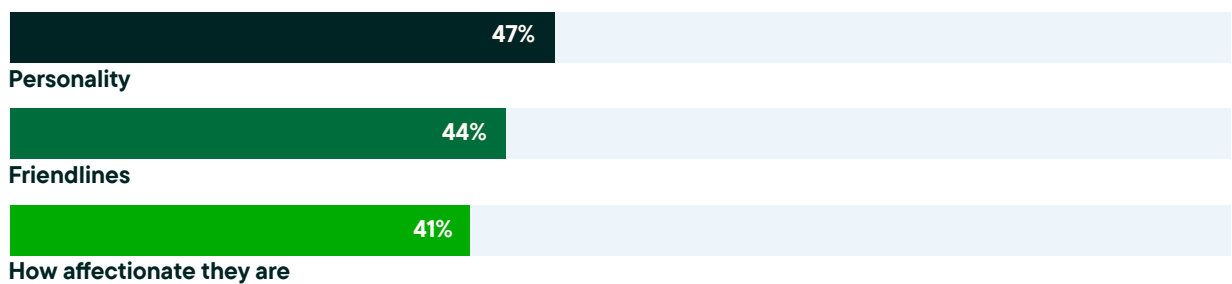
**Prof Carri Westgarth**  
Professor in Human-Animal Interaction  
University of Liverpool

## What traits in pets are owners most proud of?

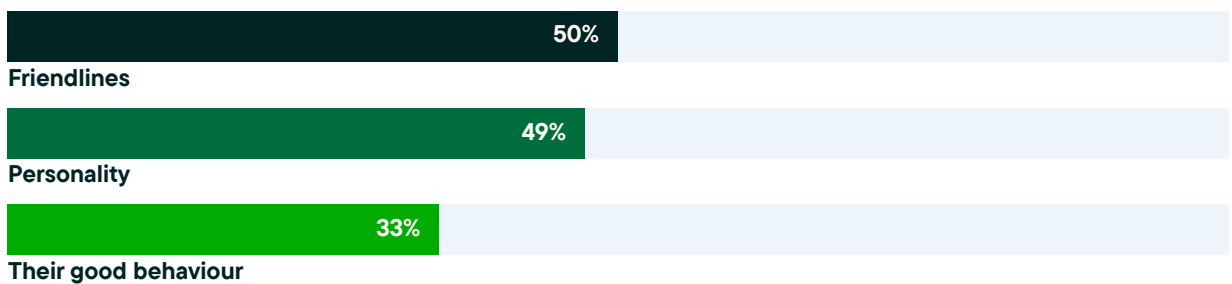
### Cats



### Dogs



### Small furries



50%

of **dog** owners agree their **dog** is cuter than most babies

46%

of **cat** owners agree their **cat** is cuter than most babies

## 2.3 Constant companions

We want our pets involved in all aspects of our lives - from the everyday to moments of celebration

Pets are ingrained into our lives. We love the companionship they provide — 37% of pet owners who work remotely at least some of the time say their pet keeps them company during their office hours. And they tag along on days out too — whether it's a visit to the local pub or a holiday away from home. In fact, 31% of dog owners take their pets to the pub.

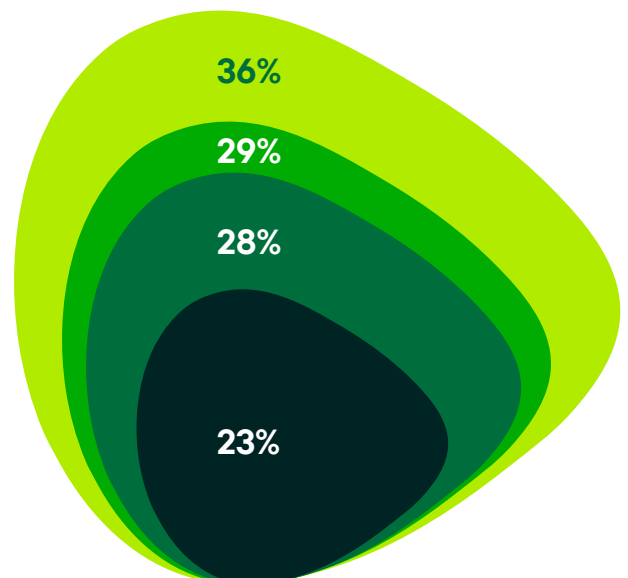
But it's not just the everyday moments we want our pets involved in, they're included in seasonal festivities too — take the 88% of pet owners who say they celebrate Christmas with their pets. And pets are also getting involved in traditions around these celebrations, with over half (55%) of pet owners buying their pets presents at Christmas, including 62% of owners of small furry animals saying the same.

Pets at Home sales data also shows evidence of this growing desire to involve our pets in the festive period. Sales of Christmas jumpers and toys all significantly increased last year, and their dog advent calendar was the best seller in Christmas 2022.

Every year, due to the rising consumer demand, Pets at Home have increased the size and variety of their range. They've also seen an uplift in owners bringing their dogs in for a Christmas groom — over 20,000 dogs were booked in to Pets Grooming salons for a Christmas spa treatment.

### On Christmas Day, pet owners...

- Place wrapped presents for their pet under the Christmas tree
- Let their pet unwrap their Christmas presents
- Prepare their pet a special Christmas meal
- Give their pet a Christmas advent calendar



“We do everything to make sure that he (Hugo the dog) is included in all family events and celebrations. And we do the same with Christmas — Hugo will always have a small pile of presents on Christmas.”



**Ellie C.**  
Benfleet, England, dog and hamster owner



Beyond annual celebrations, we also include our pets in our key life moments. From featuring in the official wedding photos to taking on the role of a ring bearer, we're highly creative in finding ways to keep our pets centre stage at the important events in our lives.

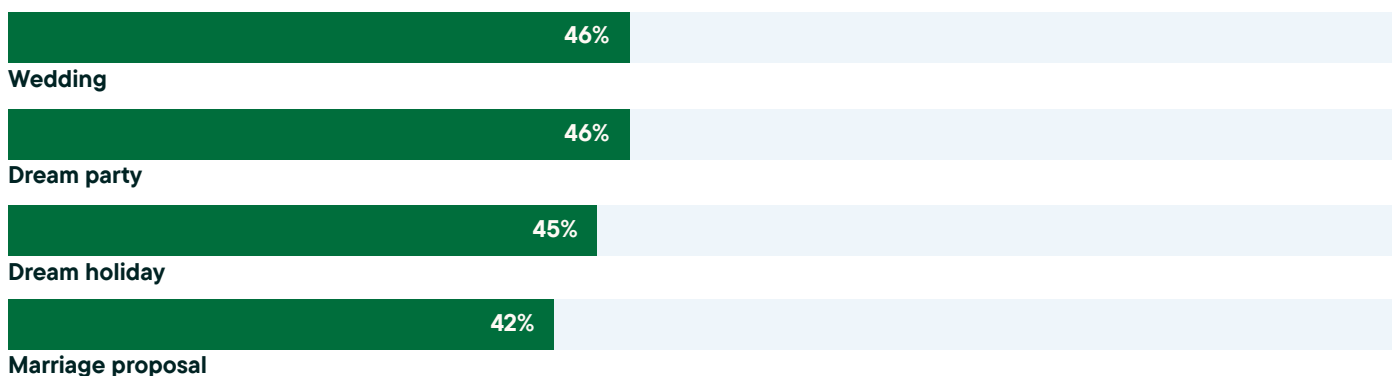
Catering to pet-obsessed brides and grooms-to-be, Last Night Of Freedom is a stag and hen firm in Gateshead claiming to be the world's first dog-friendly stag and hen do company and offering itineraries where doggies are welcome at all activities and venues. Beyond nuptials, we also want our pets to take part in our dream parties or holidays.

"Me and my husband are looking to renew our wedding vows and I want to involve my cat in that key moment. I want to get an outfit made for my cat and she will be attending the ceremony. The cat then will come to the reception and she will have special food made for her, which allows her to spend time at the venue and be involved in the celebration."



**Sarah L.**  
Merthyr Tydfil, Wales,  
cat owner

## Pet owners who have, or want to have, their pet involved in their...



## 2.4 Loving gestures

We will go above and beyond to demonstrate our affection

With 71% of pet owners saying they would do anything to keep their pet happy, it's clear we are willing to invest time, money and effort into showing our love. For some, this takes the form of culinary treats, with over half (59%) of pet owners spending time in the kitchen to cook for their pets from scratch. When asked why, 54% of pet owners say it is simply because their pets are worth it.



**Dr. Gudrun Ravetz MRCVS**  
Veterinary Officer.  
Pets at Home Group Plc

“

Whilst we all want to show our love and affection for our pets, the safest way to feed them is to ensure they are getting a complete diet. As home cooking often doesn't provide this, Pets at Home advise visiting one of their stores and speaking to their nutrition experts. They can provide guidance on a range of food that is suitable for individual pet needs.”

**Pet owners cook for their pets because...**

**54%**

They're worth it

**27%**

It's their birthday

**24%**

It's a special occasion

**71%**

of pet owners say they would do anything to keep our pet happy – and this increases to **75% among pet owners who don't have children**

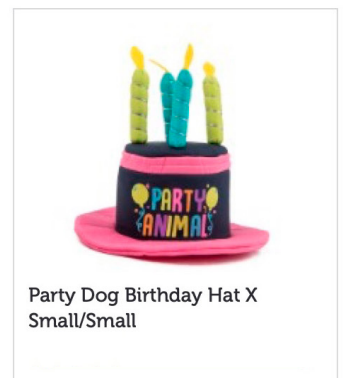
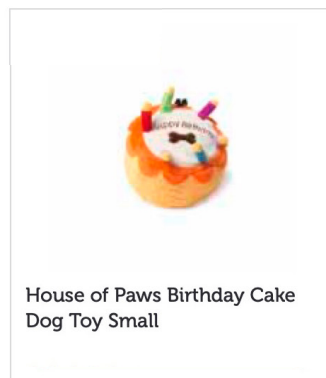
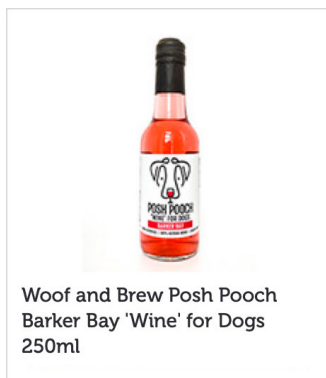
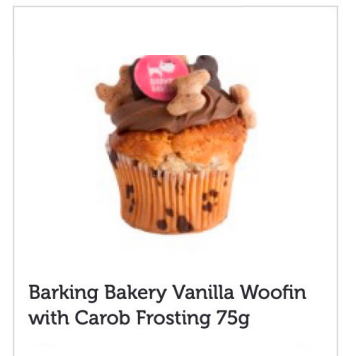
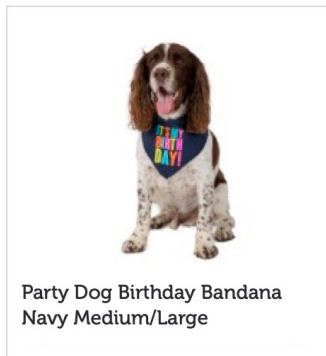


Just like how we would treat our other family members, we want our pets to feel spoiled on special days. 37% of pet owners celebrate their pets birthday, while 48% will buy birthday gifts and 27% will cook a special birthday meal.

Meanwhile, 28% of pet owners have thrown their pet a party, rising sharply to 45% between 18-24 years old. At Pets at Home, sales of gifts and party items for pets have

seen an uplift across the range. From birthday hats to 'pawsecco', we are more keen than ever to party with our beloved pets.

And because Pets at Home know just how important it is to celebrate key milestones, their VIP club gives members a free gift every year on their pet's birthday.



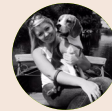


“The most unusual thing that I’ve ever done for my pet is a tea party for her on her birthday. My friend made cupcakes that would be suitable for Misty to eat.”



**Sarah L.**  
Merthyr Tydfil, Wales,  
cat owner

“Every single year on his birthday, he will have quite a few presents — cuddly toys, treats, a new bed. I’ll also make him a birthday cake. And we’ve got photos of him every single year licking it.”



**Ellie C.**  
Benfleet, England, dog  
and hamster owner



“

In 2015 it would’ve been big news if someone threw a birthday party for their pet, but now you open instagram and see loads of people having birthday parties for their pets all the time. There are pet birthday cakes, and birthday boy or girl bandanas — it’s a huge market.”

**Rachel Spencer**  
Journalist  
Pet Blogger and Media Consultant



We want to show how much we love our pets to others, and social media is a great place to start. Almost 1 in 4 (24%) of pet owners have a dedicated social media account for their pet.

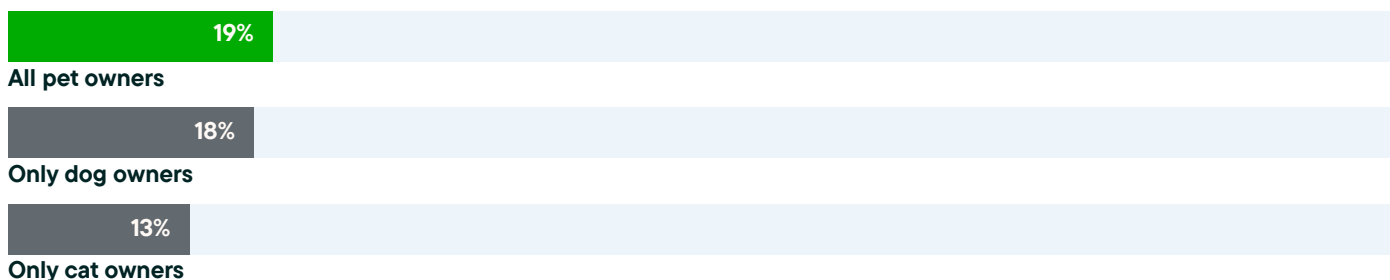
We're also actively posting about our pets on our personal accounts, with 52% of pet owners posting about their pets at least every two days. Their motivations lie in wanting to celebrate them; while 41% of pet owners post to show their love for their pets, 32% do so to show off how great their pets are.

Pet owners invest a lot of time documenting their pets, 23% take photos of their pet every day and 27% do so every couple of days.

Those who take photos of their pets at least once a week spend an average of 2 hours doing so.

But some of us are looking for more permanent ways to display our affections. While one in five (19%) of pet owners say they have a tattoo of their pet, and a further 34% would consider getting one. When looking at particular groups, a quarter (25%) of pet owners with a rabbit have a tattoo of one of their pets, as have 21% of those with a dog and 20% with a cat.

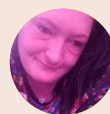
### Owners have a tattoo of their pets



# 44%

of pet owners have considered getting a tattoo of their pet

"I give my cat a lot of love and affection, and I am considering getting her name and date of birth tattooed on me."



**Sarah L.**  
Merthyr Tydfil, Wales,  
cat owner

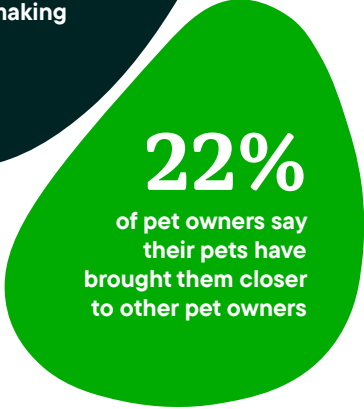
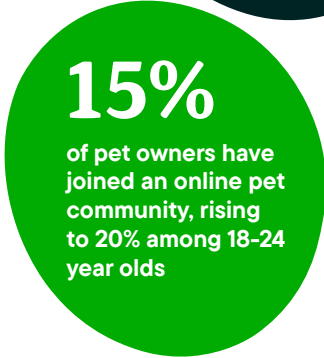
# Pets make (or break) our relationships

## 3.1 New connections

Pets have a huge impact on our social lives, helping us make new lasting relationships

Whether its small talk with strangers, making new friends on walks or attending dog meet ups, pets act as a major social lubricant, helping us form and maintain new bonds both online and in real life. In fact, 71% of pet owners say owning a pet has had a positive impact on their relationships with others, while 16% say their pets have helped them to make new friends.

A shared love for pets forms a strong basis for these relationships, helping us meet and build connections with fellow animal lovers. And with 24% of pet owners saying they chose to get a pet to increase their chances of making new friends (rising to 33% among 18-24-year-olds and 31% among men) it's clear people are aware of the positive social impacts pets can have on their lives.



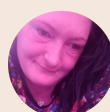


“With my old next door neighbour we had connecting back gardens through a path and she used to have a rabbit. We’d have play dates with her and her rabbit in the summer — we’d take hers into my garden or vice versa.”



**Kelly H.**  
Nottinghamshire,  
England, rabbit owner

“Having a cat has impacted my social circle because I’ve made friends with other people that have cats through online Facebook groups that I’ve joined in relation to having pets. And this led to strong, long-lasting friendships just by talking about my pet and by them talking about.”



**Sarah L.**  
Merthyr Tydfil, Wales,  
cat owner

“



**Dr. Gudrun  
Ravetz MRCVS**  
Veterinary  
Officer.  
Pets at Home  
Group Plc

Getting out with your dog is a great way to meet other people. You might be feeling a little shy but your dog won’t be and can be a great introducer to other people. The bond you have with your pet is so incredibly important, meeting someone who also shares that bond is a great start.”

“Having a pet dog has definitely impacted my social circle. We took the dogs along to a dog-walking club in the village, and it was great to meet new people there with their dogs. So, that was a great way of getting to know people in the area, because I’ve only been here for 10 years and I don’t know everybody yet.”



**Paul C.**  
Ballyclare, Northern  
Ireland, dog owner

“



There’s a social connection that pets provide us with, whereby they bring us closer to other people. We talk about our pets with them; when we go out on a walk with our dog, we talk to other dog owners. It brings neighbourhoods and communities together, whether these are physical neighbourhoods or social networks.”

**Prof Carri Westgarth**  
Professor in Human-Animal Interaction  
University of Liverpool

## 3.2 Love triangles

Pets play a huge role in our romantic relationships and can make or break them

Pets have a significant impact on our love lives. They help us get ahead in the romance roulette, with one in five of pet owners (19%) agreeing that they chose to get a pet to increase their chances of finding a partner, rising to 31% for pet owners in Greater London. On dates, they're the perfect ice breakers — 12% of pet owners say they find it much easier to talk to potential love interests because of their pet.

On the flip side, pets can also be a source of tension in romantic relationships. In fact, over half (56%) of pet owners believe that if a partner didn't get along with their pet, it would be a problem for them. At the same time, pets can stall potential breakups — 31% of people would stay with a partner longer if they liked their pet. But it's also a source of worry — 54% of pet owners agree that having a shared pet with a partner can make the breakup harder and 36% say that thinking about who would get the pet if they broke up worries them a lot.

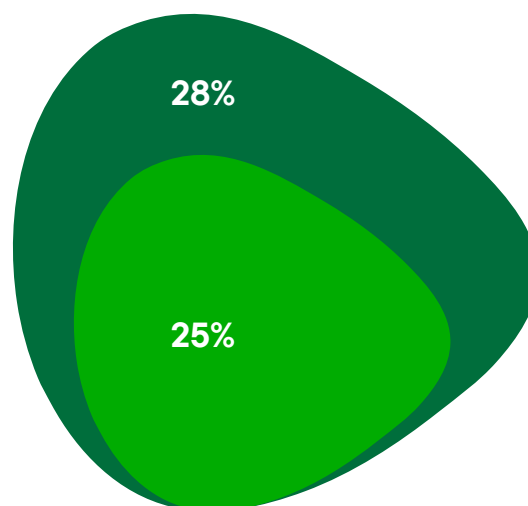
That said, pets can also be a source of support during heartbreak — over half (56%) of pet owners say that getting a pet can help people get over a breakup.

# 17%

of 18 to 24 year olds say they are more likeable to potential partners because of their pet

### Pet owners who say their pets get jealous if they spend time with their partner

● Dog owners ● Cat owners



“Molly has played an important role in developing my relationship with my partner. My partner definitely found the fact I have a dog and care so much about her very endearing. So Molly played a really important role in helping me show myself to my partner as I was getting to know her.”



**David B.**  
Edinburgh, Scotland,  
dog owner



“

I knew a girl who was meeting people online and who went on a date with a guy. The guy said he didn't like her dog and she never met up with him again. We do see quite a lot of “it's me or the dog” or “I ended a relationship because somebody didn't get on with my dog or cat” kind of stories.”

**Rachel Spencer**  
Journalist  
Pet Blogger and Media Consultant

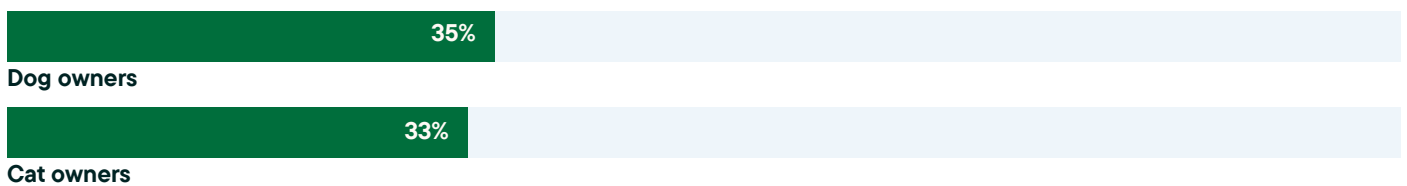
As pets increasingly become part of our love lives, compatibility with our pets is becoming a deal breaker in the quest for a potential partner. With this in mind, Tinder launched a pop-up pub experience called The Bark & Spark, where singles could bring their dogs on a first date. Set in locations across London, Edinburgh and Manchester, the event provided people with a low-pressure way to make real-world connections with fellow animal lovers.

“With my wife, I can talk about fish and what plants we are going to get for the tank. I just sit there with my wife and look at them. We definitely spend more quality time together after having the tank.”



**Kelvin K.,**  
Barry Island, Wales,  
fish owner

## Pet owners who would stay in a relationship longer if their partner liked their pet



10%

of pet owners have fallen out with their partner because of their pet



# We do anything and everything for our pets

## 4.1 Pet worries

We worry about our pets' emotional and physical welfare

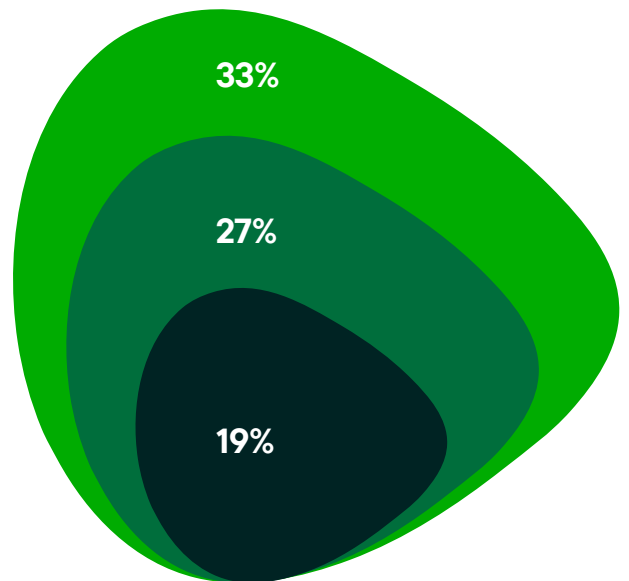
The love we feel for our animal companions means that we also fret over them — 85% of pet owners say they worry about their pets.

Busy lifestyles and routines only exacerbate these worries. Indeed, 27% of pet owners worry about leaving their pets alone for long periods of time — rising to 32% among those who only own dogs.

But these aren't the only concerns pet owners face. The cost of living crisis has put many pockets in a pinch — luckily Pets at Home have a wealth of money saving advice, ranging across subjects such as pet nutrition, emergency care, and insurance.

### People worry because their pets are...

- Getting old
- Left alone for long periods of time (e.g. when owners are at work)
- Bored



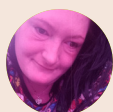
“One challenge is time. How do we manage the time away from the house? Or how do we manage holidays? We’re always trying to keep the dog, and the dog’s welfare, in the forefront of our minds.”



**Paul C.**  
Ballyclare, Northern Ireland, dog owner



“I have stopped going on long holidays so that I can spend more time with my cat and so that my cat isn't left alone. I try not to go out of the house for too long so that my cat doesn't feel left out and so that my cat always has someone with her.”



**Sarah L.**  
Merthyr Tydfil,  
Wales, cat owner

“You have to be committed to having to a dog and meeting their physical and mental needs. And this takes time and energy, and you have to do it every day.”



**David B.**  
Edinburgh, Scotland,  
dog owner

Concerns around the mental health of pets is rising, with insurance companies reporting an increasing demand for claims covering treatments that address the mental well-being of our furry friends.

One in ten (11%) pet owners say they're worried about their pet's behaviour. Some events are particularly concerning to them; for example, 29% of pet owners say that fireworks night/any events with fireworks is a very stressful period.

“



**Dr. Gudrun  
Ravetz MRCVS**  
Veterinary  
Officer.  
Pets at Home  
Group Plc

Anxiety around fireworks can be traumatic for pets and their families. But there are things that can be done to help. We would strongly advise speaking to one of our Veterinary professionals to gain long term help and support pets through their anxiety.”

## 4.2 Seeking support

### We seek support on how to best care for our pets

Because we love our pets we want to equip ourselves with the knowledge on how to best care for them. To do this, we predominantly turn to professional sources for support and advice on our pets needs. Over a third (36%) of pet owners say they turn to their vets for advice on taking care of their pets. This increases to 56% for those who are retired and to 43% for people without children.

Pet owners are also willing to consult more informal sources for guidance, with 32% saying they put their trust in online resources – increasing to 45% among owners of small furry animals. Many people are also turning to vets and ‘petfluencers’ on platforms like TikTok, who have hundreds of thousands of followers on their accounts.

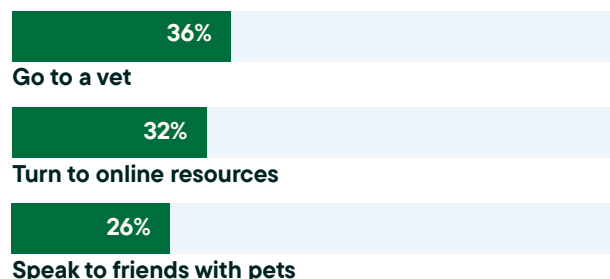


**Dr. Gudrun Ravetz MRCVS**  
Veterinary  
Officer.  
Pets at Home  
Group Plc

“

Vets for Pets has a network of almost 500 practices and surgeries who are on hand to support pet owners when they need it. Seeking veterinary advice early is so important to help prevent problems arising. Whilst it might seem easy to turn to the internet it doesn't always offer advice that's safe or accurate and our vets are highly trained and here to help.”

### For advice on pet care, pet owners...





“If we need advice health-wise, we will get in contact with the vet. We do have a really good vet that we’re able to utilise. The local Pets at Home is really great for just being able to drop in and ask questions and find new products. And I do feel like we have the support that we need to make sure we cover all those things.”



**Ellie C.**  
Benfleet, England, dog  
and hamster owner

“One of my friends has got a few pets and she’s had pets since she was quite young, so whenever my cats get ill, she’s quite happy to help me out. I always ask her for advice or sometimes Google something if I am not sure what’s going on.”



**Amna B.**  
Stockton-on-Tees,  
England, cat owner

“A few of the fish got some white dots on them and then one of them died, which made us quite worried. So we’ve been looking on the internet, trying to research what could be the cause of it. We were also worried that it might infect other fish, but luckily it didn’t.”



**Kelvin K.**  
Barry Island, Wales,  
fish owner

“White Spot is a common parasite, present in almost all aquaria. But if an aquarium isn’t well maintained it can build up and put your fish at risk. This will be particularly dangerous for fish with weak immune systems, or if they are facing an external stress such as poor water quality.

We have a range of White Spot treatments available in store and online, but it’s important that any treatment works hand in hand with removing the initial cause of stress, for instance through improved tank maintenance.

If you are unsure or have any further questions, pop into store and speak to one of our advisors.”



**Dr. Gudrun Ravetz MRCVS**  
Veterinary Officer.  
Pets at Home Group Plc

### 4.3 Doting sacrifices

#### We forgo our own creature comforts to ensure our pets are happy and healthy

The love of pets is a pleasure — but does come at a cost. We found that pet owners are no stranger to making small, everyday sacrifices for the good of their beloved pets. For instance, when it comes to comfort 74% of pet owners will share their sofa or bed with their pets even if it makes them uncomfortable.

Even if it's pouring with rain outside, pet owners will put their pets needs ahead of their desire to stay inside. This is reflected in the 72% of dog owners who take their pets for a walk even in bad weather, like rain or snow. If this wasn't enough, many people will also carry their pets if they get tired when they're out on a walk, with over half (53%) of pet owners with canine friends saying so.

**80%**  
of pet owners attend to their pet's needs before their own as soon as they get home

**74%**  
of pet owners have invested time and money to find their pet's favourite food

**45%**  
of pet owners have cancelled social plans to spend time with their pets

“Our pets love exercise. It's great for their wellbeing and, whilst sometimes we might not feel like getting out in the bad weather, it can be the push we all need to get a little bit fitter. “



**Dr. Gudrun Ravetz MRCVS**  
Veterinary Officer.  
Pets at Home Group Plc

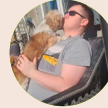


“I don’t like to lock my cats downstairs in the living room. So at night if they scratch on the door to my room asking to be let in, I actually get up to open the door for them and that happens quite a few times during the night.”



**Amna B.**  
Stockton-on-Tees,  
England, owner of cats

“Our dog Cleo has our spots on the chairs. She’s a tiny wee thing, but if she sits on our chair and the sofa — well, that’s our spot gone. And we get lots of kisses off her, which kind of freaks people out, but we don’t mind that.”



**Michael C.**  
Strabane, Northern Ireland,  
dog owner



“

The idea of providing for our pets has two sides. There’s stuff that we like, and there’s stuff that we do because we think they like it, and we get pleasure vicariously through doing that. It’s why we walk our dogs no matter what because we enjoy seeing them having a good time.”

**Prof Carri Westgarth**  
Professor in Human-Animal Interaction  
University of Liverpool





## 4.4 Pets First

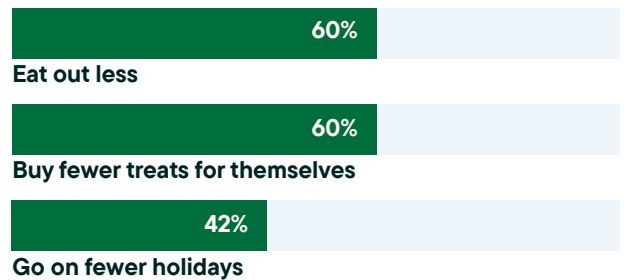
### We will ensure our pets' needs are met, despite financial pressures

The cost of living crisis is impacting many people across the world, forcing us to reconsider their priorities and cut spending even on essential bills. Yet, what remains largely unchanged is our love for our pets and the sacrifices we're willing to make for them.

Indeed, we will often put our pet's health and happiness before our own. In fact, two in five (38%) of pet owners say they're more likely to cut down on things for themselves because of the cost of living crisis, while just 10% say they are more likely to cut down on things for their pet. Among pet owners who don't have children, 48% say they are more likely to cut down on things for themselves, while 50% of unemployed pet owners say the same.



### To ensure their pets keep the same quality of life, people are likely to...



“For owners looking for ways to prioritise their budget in times of difficulty, the most important place to focus is on good nutrition.

Our Pets at Home experts are on hand to support people who might be struggling. From picking the right type of food to cover all nutrients for a healthy pet, to proper pet food storage and portion control — we can offer lots of money-saving hints, tips and advice.”



**Dr. Gudrun Ravetz MRCVS**  
**Veterinary Officer.**  
**Pets at Home Group Plc**

“

Pet owners would rather pay for their dog or cat to eat well. Sacrificing themselves, they will put their own pet's health and well-being before their own.”



**Rachel Spencer**  
**Journalist**  
**Pet Blogger and Media Consultant**

“My dog, Nancy, probably costs me in the region of £200 per month because she has to get groomed every six to seven weeks and I have a dog walker for her. I can afford it and I love having her, so for me, it’s a bit of a no-brainer because I wouldn’t change a thing.”



**Elizabeth T.**  
Dalkeith, Scotland,  
dog owner

“I really believe that if you’re going to own a dog you have to commit to providing them the best life you can. And that means spending the money to make sure that they have high quality things, such as a high quality diet and toys and all the other things that they need to have a good life.”



**David B.**  
Edinburgh, Scotland,  
dog owner

“



Pet owners will sacrifice their own food, warmth and everything else for the sake of their pets. People really value being able to give their pet the best food that they can, and the training that they need to ensure their behaviour is suitable.”

**Rachel Spencer**  
Journalist  
Pet Blogger and Media Consultant





## About Us

### Pets

We are Pets. One destination for all pet care needs, dedicated to making life better for pets and the people who love them.

We are made up of over 450 stores, over 350 grooming salons, and almost 500 veterinary surgeries and practices. All united by our love for pets and their people, and our commitment to giving them the care they deserve. From nutritional advice to grooming, veterinary care to rehoming, more people trust us with their pets than anyone else.

Because we're all for pets.

### Canvas8

Canvas8 is an award-winning strategic insights practice operating out of London, New York, Los Angeles and Singapore. We help our clients understand people so they can make better decisions and better work.

Our core team of Behavioural Analysts — with backgrounds ranging from anthropology to psychology, journalism to strategy — is complemented by a global network of over 1,400 influential thinkers and cultural observers. What unites us is a desire to understand people as people, not just as consumers, and to put this understanding at the heart of business.