

ProPets



Positive about Pets



www.propetsgroup.org.uk

ProPets was formed by key pet membership organisations to provide a strong united voice to promote responsible pet ownership. Its member organisations:

- Promote the responsible sale and care of pets
- Provide guidelines to the public on how to identify a good pet shop
- Highlight the pet industry as a source of free expert practical advice on the care and welfare of pet animals-especially to local authority officers involved in pet shop licensing
- Promote positive attitudes to pet keeping, pet keepers and the pet industry by providing high quality information to politicians and opinion formers on the key role these activities play in the social, cultural and economic fabric of this country
- Facilitate co-operation between all like minded groups within pet keeping



Benefits of Pet Ownership

Over half the nation's households (52.3%) currently share their lives with an animal, and cat and dog owning households have risen by 12% in the period from 2000-2004.

Positive health impacts

- Pet owning pensioners make up to 21% fewer visits to the doctor.
- Dog owners make 8% and cat owners 12% fewer visits to the doctor than non-pet owning people.
- Children from households with pets have stronger immune systems and take fewer days off sick from school, receiving up to 18 extra half days schooling per year! This is most pronounced children aged 5-8 years old.
- Exposure to pets in the first year of life lowers the prevalence of allergic rhinitis and asthma in school children.
- Pet ownership is associated with lower levels of stress.
- Pet owners have lower blood pressure, triglyceride and cholesterol levels than non-owners that cannot be attributed to differences like cigarette smoking, diet, weight or socio-economic profile.

Benefits such as these led to savings in NHS expenditure of 1.5% from 2000-04, which cumulatively amounted to over £3bn.



Positive Impacts on Child Development

Parents often obtain a pet because they consider them to be good for their children. Studies have shown that pets:

- are educational
- teach responsibility
- are important for moral development
- are good companions

Pets in the home instil responsibility, encourage social as well as environmental awareness and have positive health benefits on children. Children and young people benefit physically, emotionally and socially from living with, caring for, or having regular contact with companion animals.

- Contact with pets develops nurturing behaviour in children who may grow to be more nurturing adults: children who



have pets in the home are involved in a range of regular caregiving activities for them such as feeding, walking and grooming. This may well help to teach children about responsibility, and build their self-esteem by enabling them to feel competent.

- It has also been shown that children with pets are better socially integrated, have wider social networks and are more popular with their classmates.
- Children's power of language improves through interaction with animals.
- Young children with a strong bond with a family pet score highly on social competency and empathy scores.
- In a study conducted with a class of primary school children aged 7-8 years old, 90% listed their pets in their top 10 special relationships.



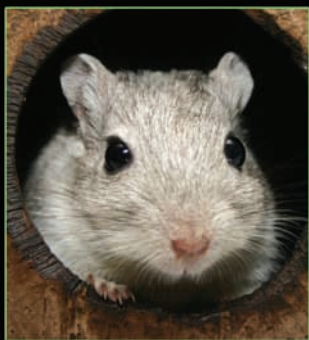
The UK Pet Care Industry Today

- For pets to benefit and enrich our lives as they do, they need to be supported by the dynamic and dedicated pet care industry that exists in the UK. The industry has a turnover of more than £4bn and employs over 47,500 people in 13,300 pet care businesses; this includes pet retailers, pet food and accessory wholesalers and manufacturers; kennels & catteries, groomers, breeders, as well as professional services like pet sitters and financial products like pet insurance.
- The pet care industry has a key role as specialists in underpinning responsible pet ownership, providing help and advice on all aspects of pet ownership. Its trained professionals freely impart knowledge on a range of pet ownership issues to the public. Education is therefore of real importance to the sector.
- Training is a legislative requirement for pet retailers, and is higher and more structured than most other retail outlets. Outlets that sell livestock require at least one member of staff to hold the City & Guilds Pet Store



Management qualification, or equivalent. This is a level 3 qualification, equivalent in status to the Veterinary Nursing qualification.

- For those retailers dealing with fish and other aquatic organisms, the Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association runs equivalent courses.
- Dog groomers too can undertake a range of nationally accredited qualifications, thereby increasing their knowledge and skills.
- Pet shops require a licence from the local authority before they are permitted to sell animals, as do boarding kennels & catteries which must prove their suitability for receiving boarding pets. Both types of establishment are subject therefore to inspection visits by a competent officer which renders them transparent and accountable. Furthermore pet shops are a visible source of companion animals, and large numbers of the public enter pet shops freely each day keeping an eye on standards too!



Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association

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