

# Pets reunited



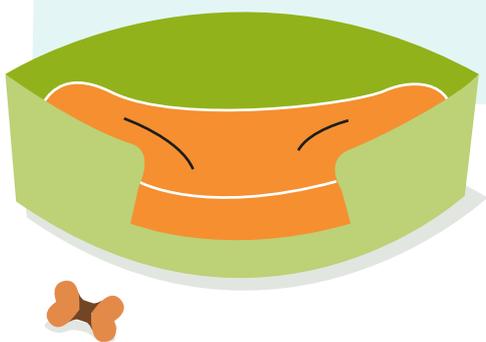
What to  
do if your  
pet goes  
missing



Sainsbury's Bank

**It can be very upsetting when a pet goes missing. Knowing what to do if it does happen could provide some comfort, and improve your chances of getting your pet back.**

**This guide offers a range of practical tips to consider, should you lose your pet. It also outlines some preventative steps you can take, to help reduce the risk of your animal getting lost or stolen.**



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# Why do pets go missing?

Unfortunately, the stress of a lost pet is something many pet owners have experienced. One in three pets go missing in their lifetime, and there is often a simple explanation.

## Dogs

Depending on its temperament and personality, a dog could run off on its own accord, given the chance - chasing wildlife or a scent, for example - especially if it's not used to recall. So-called 'dognappings' are also becoming increasingly common. The risk of your dog going missing is generally higher:

- > **if it's left in an unsecured garden**
- > **when other people are looking after it**
- > **if you let it off its lead in a new area**

The most common breeds of dog to run away are:



Labrador Retrievers



Cocker Spaniels



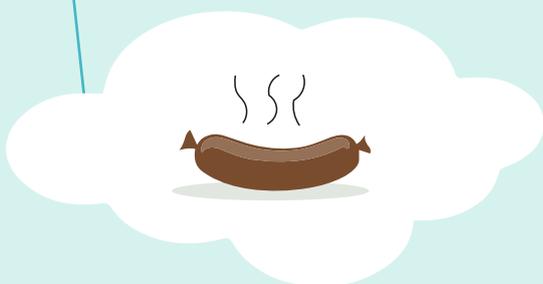
Jack Russell Terriers



German Shepherds



English Springer Spaniels



# Cats

Many more cats go missing than dogs, as cats are far more likely to roam the streets alone - negotiating traffic and exploring new areas. If you have an indoor only cat, make sure doors and windows are closed and secured when leaving the house.

If your cat does go missing, it's worth bearing in mind that it could be hiding nearby, rather than lost. Indoor cats that are let out or escape may get nervous and seek shelter on your property or the surrounding area. The same goes for outdoor cats that find themselves in a new environment.



- > **Start a search by circling your neighbourhood, calling your cat's name.**
- > **Look under any bushes / shrubs in your own and nearby gardens.**
- > **Stop to listen at garages and sheds where your cat could be hiding, or locked in.**
- > **If you've recently moved from within the area, your cat may have found its way back to your old house.**



# Other pets

Small furies, such as guinea pigs and rabbits, could escape if your property is not secure; for example, if there are gaps in your fence, or you've left your doors, windows or gates open.



# How to be prepared

## ID on collar

Make sure your pet always leaves the house wearing a collar ID, with your name and address on it. For dogs, it's a legal requirement when outside, and any pet wearing an ID tag is more likely to be returned to you if it goes missing.



## Missing pet kit

Get a 'missing pet kit' together, so you are prepared and have all the relevant information handy if your pet does go missing. This might contain:

- > **your pet's description, age and weight**
- > **photos of your pet**
- > **important people to contact, including your vet and your microchip company**
- > **a list of local animal shelters**
- > **a list of any relatives or friends you and your pet have visited while on walks; it's not unheard of for animals to show up at a home they have been to previously**

## Microchipping

From Spring 2016, all dogs over 8 weeks in **England**, **Wales and Scotland** will be required by law to be **microchipped**.

A microchip implant contains information relating to your pet, as well as your contact details. In the run up to Spring 2016, some charities, including The Dog Trust, Blue Cross and Battersea Dogs & Cats Home, are offering free microchipping for dogs.

If a microchipped pet is lost, a vet, animal warden or animal shelter will be able to scan its chip and contact the owner.

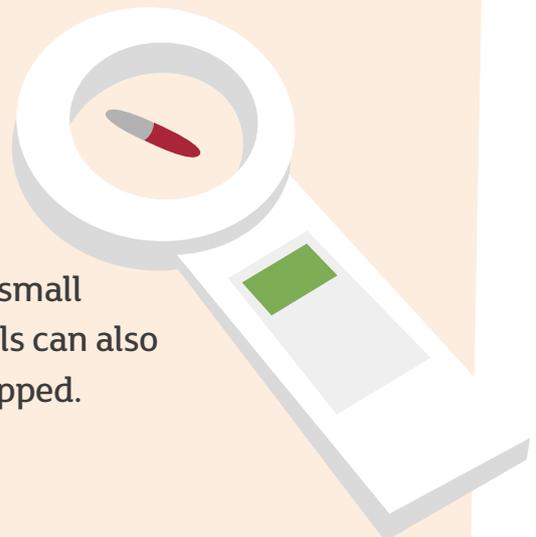
It's a good idea to ensure your microchip company has up-to-date details for you and your pet held on its database.

Though not a legal requirement, it's worth considering whether your cat (or other pet) should be **microchipped**.

### Which animals can be microchipped?

- > Dogs
- > Cats
- > Rabbits
- > Horses
- > Parrots

Ferrets and small furry animals can also be microchipped.



# Preventative measures

What can you do to minimise the risk of your pet going missing?



## Secure premises

Make sure both gate and fence are high enough for bigger dogs

Erect sturdy fencing and check that your gate is secure to keep dogs from escaping



Check for gaps under and between the fence for smaller dogs, house cats and small furies

Bear in mind that most cats can usually scale even a high fence or gate



Make sure windows and doors are closed and secured





## Be aware of dognapping

'Dognapping' is when criminals steal dogs, most often to sell them on the black market, and unfortunately this is on the rise. Around 1,310 thefts were reported in the 12 month leading up to February 2015; a 20 percent increase on the period between February 2013 and February 2014. Dogs tend to be stolen because of their sale value or their fighting and guarding ability.

### Top five breeds targeted by dognappers:



Staffordshire Bull Terriers



Chihuahuas



Cocker Spaniels



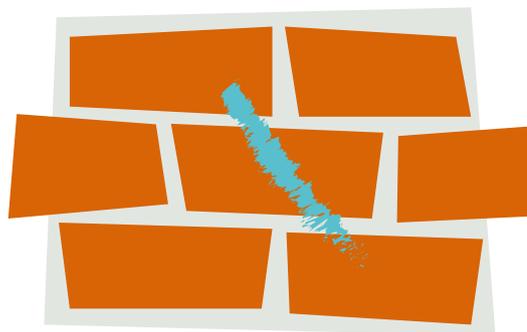
Jack Russell Terriers



German Shepherds

### What should I look out for?

- > **Suspicious markings left on your property.**
- > **A stranger asking you lots of questions about your pet.**
- > **A stranger leaning over your garden fence / yard wall to see your pet.**



### What else can I do?

Be vigilant and cautious. Someone showing an interest in your dog may well be perfectly innocent, but be careful about revealing too many details, like where you live, your pet's name, and whether or not they've been neutered.

**Avoid leaving your dog unattended in a yard or garden for long periods of time.**

# What to do if your pet goes missing?

## Word of mouth

One of the first things you can do, is walk or drive around your local area, possibly with friends or relatives, to look for your pet. Take a torch if it's dark.

Is there a sound or word your pet responds to? Perhaps shake your pet's treat box or a favorite squeaky toy? Bring that item on the search and make some noise while calling your pet's name.



**It's also a good idea to let your neighbours know that your pet is missing, in case it shows up on their property, or they spot it in the area.**



## Contact the authorities

Contact the local council, dog warden, police and animal control authorities with a description and the time and area in which your pet went missing. They will be the ones who are contacted if your pet has been in a car accident, or is reported as a stray.

**In England and Wales,** there's a facility for members of the public to report stray dogs to **[their local council](#)** .

**In Scotland,** councils will need to be approached. There is also a useful facility online called **[Lost Dogs Scotland](#)** .

# Check with animal shelters

Contact animal shelters to see if they have an animal fitting your pet's description.

## Posters and leaflets

If possible, put together posters and leaflets containing relevant information.

1. **The missing pet's name.**
2. **A brief description of the missing pet – breed, or type, size, any distinctive markings.**
3. **A photo of the missing pet.**
4. **Your contact details.**

Pet search services like Animal Search UK can create and distribute posters for you. Distribute posters and flyers widely, including to the following.

1. **Vets.**
2. **Rescue centres.**
3. **Local shops / newsagents.**
4. **Local post offices.**
5. **Display them around your local area.**
6. **Ask friends and relatives to help spread the word.**
7. **Social media / online.**



**Also consider offering a reward, and including the details on the flyer / poster.**



# National databases and search services

There are databases, usually run by charities, such as the **National Missing Pet Register**® or **DogLost**®, that hold registers of missing and found pets.

National search services like **Animal Search UK**®, which specialises in reuniting owners with their lost pets, may also be able to help. Members of the public can add details of their lost pets to the website.



## Who else should I contact?



The **Pet Owners Association**® offer a comprehensive list of organisations across the UK that may be able to help. Consult their website to get a list, and provide each organisation with:

- > a photograph of your pet
- > a detailed description of your pet
- > its temperament
- > its microchip code (if applicable)
- > your contact details



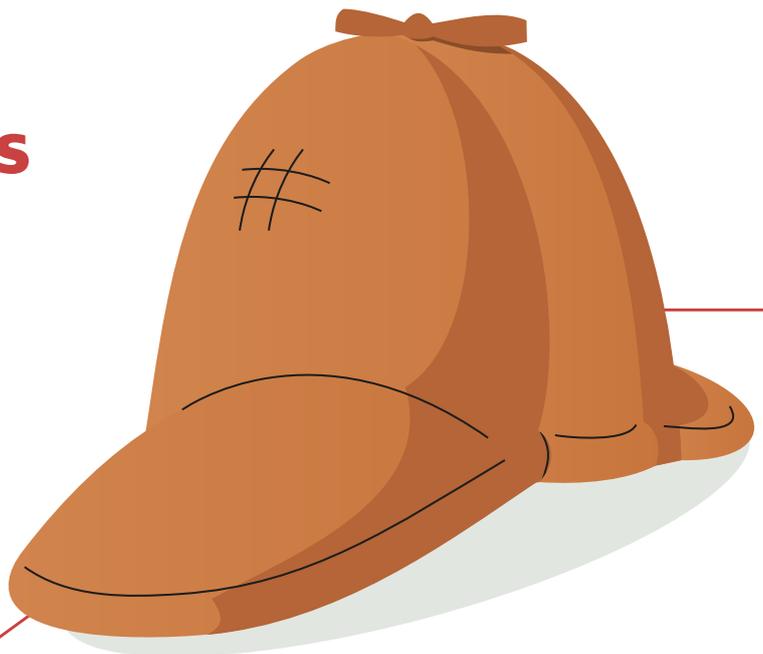
## Can my pet insurer help?

If you have pet insurance, contact your insurer; they may be able to provide financial assistance and advice in relation to advertising for your pet's return.

**Many pet insurance providers offer optional extras (for an additional charge), such as cover that meets the cost of advertising and any rewards, in the event of your pet going missing.**

## Pet detectives

You could also consider hiring a 'pet detective'. These types of businesses specialise in the investigation of animal theft, as well as the recovery of lost or stolen pets.



# Leaving your pet in someone else's care

If you're planning to go away, or need someone else to look after your pet for a period of time, consider the following to help keep your pet safe and happy.

- > Do you have a relative or trusted friend who can take your pet while you're away?
- > Do you know of any reputable kennels or catteries - or can someone you know recommend one?
- > Could you have your pet stay in its home environment, by asking a friend or pet professional to 'pet sit'?



## Relatives or friends

Have a checklist of things they need to be aware of, such as the following.

1. Whether your dog can be let off its lead in any outdoor environment.
2. Whether your cat / other pet can be let outdoors.
3. If there are any specific words or sounds your pet responds to.
4. Make sure they have your and your vet's contact details, in case of an emergency.

## Pet professionals

There are many pet sitters in the UK; consider the following if you are thinking of hiring one to look after your pet.

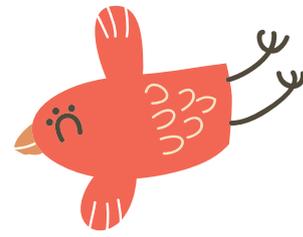
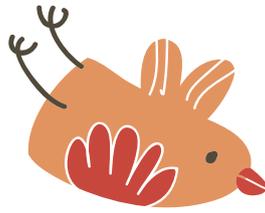
1. They should be insured.
2. Ideally, they should be registered with a national body, such as the National Association of Pet Sitters and Dog Walkers.
3. They should be **DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checked**, or have a basic disclosure, if pet sitting at your home.
4. Look for named, good testimonials.
5. Try to make sure you meet them first.

# Where can you find out more?

The following organisations can provide more help and information:

- > [The Blue Cross](#)
- > [Dogs Trust](#)
- > [RSPCA](#)
- > [SSPCA](#)
- > [Battersea Dogs & Cats Home](#)





This PDF aims to be informative and engaging. Though it includes tips and information, it does not constitute advice and should not be used for any financial decisions. Sainsbury's Bank accepts no responsibility for the content of external websites included within this PDF.

## Sources

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