

Separation anxiety campaign launched by ECDH

Pet owners are being urged by Edinburgh Dog and Cat Home to take steps to reduce the risk of separation anxiety in their animal companions as restrictions are lifted further.

Separation anxiety is, much as with humans, when an animal becomes exceedingly worried when left alone or separated from their human companions. In a new educational campaign, the Home is highlighting the signs and symptoms an anxious pet may display, as well as what can be done to help alleviate stress in our animals.

Edinburgh Dog and Cat Home's education officer, Daniel Tipping, said: "Our pets find comfort in routine and – like it or not – due to the pandemic, working from home, and not being able to socialise as often, many of our routines have become quite predictable.

"We at the Home worry that as more workers return to the office or people leave the house more to socialise with friends and family, the sudden change from being home all day to hardly home at all may come as quite a shock to our pets.

"One of the difficulties of separation anxiety is, because it only happens when we're separated from our pets, we can easily miss the early signs of stress and not be aware of the condition until it's become quite serious."



In the resources made available at the Home's website, some of the signs of separation anxiety have been highlighted and include easily missed cues such as pacing around the house and excessive panting, or more undesirable behaviours such as

destruction, soiling and vocalisation.

The Home is encouraging pet owners to start observing their pets, either as they prepare to leave the house or once they have departed by using a remotely controlled camera, to watch for early signs of stress. They advise owners to start making gradual changes now to help desensitise their pets to being alone and to make use of enrichment aids, exercise and other sources of comfort to ease their pet into a new routine.

For those who are concerned at their pet displaying more worrying signs of separation anxiety, the Home is encouraging a more comprehensive approach and, where possible, to speak to a reputable trainer or animal behaviourist.

For more information on separation anxiety in pets, including what to look for and what can be done to help alleviate the condition in your own pet, visit <https://edch.org.uk/separation-anxiety>.