

Pet owners count cost of living

Scotland's largest animal welfare charity received nearly 100 calls per week last year from owners considering giving up their pets, as more animals became victims of the cost of living crisis.

The Scottish SPCA said its figures showed a “worrying” 24% increase in the heartbreaking calls in 2024, compared with the previous year.

The charity revealed that 4779 people – an average of 92 every week – made contact for advice about giving up their pet.

Many cited fears about how they would afford pet food and care, or simply not being able to cope with their beloved animal.

The Scottish SPCA said the findings of its “impact report” signalled the need to ramp up early support for people who may be struggling and prevent such situations from spiralling.

In response, the charity is expanding grassroots work in communities to put support in place before animals suffer and need to come into its care.

Last year, the Scottish SPCA helped 16,478 owners and their pets stay together with advice from its inspectors and help with essentials through its Pet Aid food services providing pet food and supplies to food banks across Scotland.

In addition, the charity's community veterinary service Pet Aid Veterinary has provided treatment for 489 animals since its launch just six months ago, in a bid to reduce the need for animals to go into the charity's care.

The project, which is being piloted in the Glasgow area, sees a community veterinary nurse team visit owners and their pets at home to carry out basic healthcare assessments.

Animals in need of more complex veterinary treatment can then be referred to the charity's Glasgow centre.

Due to this change in how the charity provides veterinary care along with increasing animal behavioural support and improving adoption and fostering processes more animals than ever found loving homes in 2024.

A recently relaunched "matching" service for animals helps match prospective adopters to animals, helping animals find their forever homes more quickly.

The latest Scottish SPCA figures also show that in 2024 there was a 13% increase in adoption, 30% increase in fostering and animals spending 30% less time in the charity's care.

Scottish SPCA Chief Executive Kirsteen Campbell said: "It's never been more clear that across Scotland there's a desperate need to tackle the root causes of animal welfare issues and get help into communities before issues start to spiral.

"Our inspectors and animal rescue officers do an incredible job on the frontline but too often they are seeing complex and sad situations where earlier help could have prevented an animal needing to come into our care.

"That's why in 2025 we're boosting our efforts to help people in communities across Scotland, changing the way we work and making sure our services are being directed to where they're most needed so that we can help as many animals and people as

possible to stay together.”

The latest Scottish SPCA figures also show that costs rose by 44% in the past three years.

The charity, which is funded entirely from donations and receives no government funding, says it now costs over £25 million a year to deliver its essential services for the animals and people of Scotland.



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