

# New legislation set to improve the safety and welfare of cats in England

From 10 June 2024, all owned cats in England must be microchipped with correct registration details by law.

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Since 2016, it has been a legal requirement for dogs to be microchipped in the UK and that the keepers contact details are kept up to date on a Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs-compliant (Defra) database. From 10 June 2024, it will be compulsory that owned cats in England are microchipped and registered in the same way (Defra, 2023).

The PDSA Animal Wellbeing Report (2023) revealed that 24% of UK adults own a cat. 75% of cats were microchipped, as opposed to 90% of dogs. Worryingly, 62% of cat owners (5.1 million cats) whose cat has been microchipped do not know what database their cat's microchip is registered on (PDSA Animal Wellbeing Report, 2023). This indicates two areas which require attention: providing the opportunity for keepers to have their cats implanted and providing clear instructions about how to check which database the cat is registered on.

On average, nearly 13000 pets registered with identibase go missing each year in the UK (based on missing pet notifications received between 01/01/2022 and 31/12/23). The keepers of these animals have the advantage that their pet is traceable, if their keepers' contact details have been kept up to date. One of our roles as a microchip supplier is to assist practices in educating keepers regarding the benefits and legal obligations of microchipping. The journey does not end once the keeper has taken the first step to have their pet microchipped – correct registration is vital to the pet protection journey. identi provides four options for registration giving choice to the practice; scan the QR code for further information. Apart from self-registration, all other options have a call to action for the keeper. They are required to verify the pet and check that their contact details are up to date. Sadly, all too often we hear that a pet has been found, it is microchipped, but the contact details are incorrect, thereby delaying

the pet getting reunited with its owner. Therefore, compliance is integral to a successful outcome. A lost cat causes stress, and the experience can be improved on with the peace of mind that when the cat is found, the keeper is immediately traceable. identi provides one flyer per chip to hand to the keeper whether they are instructed to self-register or not. The flyer provides step by step instructions, as well as identi's contact details should keepers have questions. Ultimately, the owner will log into their identibase account, check their contact details and cat details are correct and then they can access their cats microchip certificate for their records. The keeper need only make changes to the account should the cat's details or their contact details require updating. Potential practice activities include:

- Send out a call-to-action message to those owners whose cats are unchipped
- Offer implantation if the cat is coming in for an anaesthetic
- Offer implantation if the cat is due in for a routine appointment such as a vaccination
- Have the client cat chipping flyer at reception
- Add a microchipping offer to the practice newsletter
- If capacity allows, run nurse microchip clinics
- Use local newspapers to run a found cat reunification
- Share the financial consequences of being fined versus the cost of implantation on social media
- Share a post on social media detailing 'what to do if your cat goes missing' highlighting that keepers need to contact their microchip database ASAP
- Share a post titled 'Don't remember who your cat is registered with? Then visit [www.identibase.co.uk](http://www.identibase.co.uk) scroll down to 'Check a chip'. Enter the 15-digit microchip number to find out which UK database holds your cats details'

Identi, which comprises of identichip for microchip supply and identibase, one of the UK's largest and the longest established Defra-compliant pet microchipping databases, provides practices with relevant support for the staff and a range of client facing materials. The Practice Pet Protection Pack will be available shortly to existing and new identichip clients. The pack includes staff support materials such as microchipping law guides, client leaflets and short informative videos for staff.

identiday is being run on Wednesday 20 March 2024, the first day of spring, to encourage keepers to check their identi microchip contact details are up to date. The new identi App is available to download and makes checking details more convenient. Digital practice support for identiday is available on request.

If you would like a one-to-one remote call to ask microchipping or compulsory cat chipping related questions, please email [contact@identichip.co.uk](mailto:contact@identichip.co.uk) to book a slot or visit stand 18 at VMG Congress. **CA**

## References

- Defra. Treasured pets now safer as microchipping for cats becomes compulsory. 2023. [www.gov.uk/government/news/treasured-pets-now-safer-as-microchipping-for-cats-becomes-compulsory](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/treasured-pets-now-safer-as-microchipping-for-cats-becomes-compulsory) (accessed 26 February 2024)
- PDSA. Welcome to the PDSA Animal Wellbeing Report 2023. 2023. [www.pdsa.org.uk/what-we-do/pdsa-animal-wellbeing-report/paw-report-2023](http://www.pdsa.org.uk/what-we-do/pdsa-animal-wellbeing-report/paw-report-2023) (accessed 26 February 2024)

