

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Cat and Dog Review](#)
Subject: Feedback for review
Date: Sunday, 4 August 2019 8:08:05 PM

Hello,

Please see below further comments for review.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

Registration

There is no need to issue to a new registration number/tag to pets every time, nor if they move councils. Cars keep the same registration number so why not pets?

I have mixed feelings about lifetime registration. On the face of it it is money saving, but I haven't used it because by the time it was introduced my dog was already 4 years old, leaving a 50-50 chance that it would be cheaper to keep him on 3-year registrations. It may also be difficult for some people to pay a large upfront cost. I also understand that councils would be unhappy about loss of revenue – I thought that dog registrations funded dog facilities (water bowls, poo bags etc.), which makes sense to me rather than funding through general rates. An alternative to lifetime registrations could be to have a half-price registration for senior pets, or have a lifetime cap on payments so re-registration is free after that.

The current council registration procedure is labour intensive, as it is still processed by a person who then sends you a tag. Keeping lifetime numbers would allow for a web-based renewal where people just confirm their details and then make payment, lowering administration costs. An app could also be developed so people have access to their pet's profile, which may help people to keep their details up to date.

Microchipping

Microchipping is ethically questionable – we don't microchip humans, but for some reason think it is okay to insert computer chips into animals purely for the convenience of humans. It's also hard to see how microchipping cats is useful – cats are naturally timid, so how does one catch a cat to check its microchip without traumatising it by trapping somehow? A much better option is to use technology: if owners photograph their pets from multiple angles, image recognition software could be used to search a database (the Dept of Transport has used this type of software in the past to check for possible fake licences using the same person; it created some headaches for twins to prove their existence). Even a seemingly generic pet like a black cat wouldn't be too hard to identify, because in reality any animal sighted wandering probably lives within a few kilometres of the sighting location.

Having an app as suggested under registration would make it easy to help people take those photos. Another good option would be for people to flag if their pet was missing, which would make it easier to reunite lost pets with owners. Having an app based on

council registration is also more likely to be used and kept up to date – when I moved house I was conscious of telling the council because my dog has a registration tag and the council is visible in the local area, whereas I don't have that connection to the pet registry and only remembered later to change those details.

Microchipping is also of next to no value for pets who are effectively confined. It's an expensive just-in-case method of identification, especially if the pet is already wearing a collar with identification.

Sterilisation

Sterilisation of cats is good to reduce unwanted kittens, but thought needs to be given to how this will work longer term. Unlike dogs, purebred cats are in the minority. Most people instead choose moggies, who are hardy and available in lots of colours. These cats aren't sold for profit, so there is no incentive for breeders to breed them. So if the sterilisation law was ultimately successful in preventing unplanned litters and restricting breeders, how would people acquire moggies and how would their genetic diversity be maintained?

To my mind, the only useful provision in the existing Cat Act is the sterilisation requirement. Registration and microchipping are just impositions on owners that don't actually change cat behaviours and so don't deliver benefits to the community.

Wandering cats

Cats ought to be subject to the same confinement requirements as dogs, for their own safety as much as avoiding nuisance to neighbours. Confinement will also further act against unwanted litters. There are numerous options available to either keep the cat inside, cat-proof the yard, or install a cat enclosure. The government should be encouraging these options by offering rewards, e.g.:

- rebates on products
- reduced registration fees
- no microchip needed [this one is at no cost to government as microchip fees are collected by third parties]

Wandering and nuisance cats, along with unwanted kittens, are the reasons why we needed a Cat Act. Unfortunately, at the time of introduction, the value of measures like cat curfews was acknowledged but summarily excluded. This needs to be remedied.