# Rising cat abductions and poisonings spark urgent call for pet safety laws in Wales



Increasing reports of cat disappearances in Wales have raised alarm among pet owners and animal welfare advocates, prompting concerns over potential crimes against these beloved companions. In the Garth Owen area of Newtown, Powys, around ten cats have gone missing in the past year, a trend that local officials and animal welfare representatives describe as troubling. Kelly Healy, a councillor for the area, noted that many of these disappearances occurred within a few months, raising suspicions of foul play. “It's very suspicious behaviour, and somebody may have been taking them,” she stated, highlighting the community's growing concern.

The phenomenon of missing cats is not unique to Newtown. The Powys Animal Welfare charity, led by founder Aldwyth Bates, has also observed this unusual clustering of disappearances. Bates remarked, “We started to be very suspicious, particularly as it was concentrated in one area over a few months,” indicating a pattern that deviates from the normal. Reports from the County Times suggest that some local cats have been trapped and relocated up to 150 miles away, deepening the apprehension felt by residents.

This surge of alarming reports not only highlights the potential for criminal activity but also coincides with other troubling incidents of cruelty and neglect reported throughout Wales. In a related issue, the RSPCA has recently issued warnings regarding suspected cat poisonings in Kidwelly, Carmarthenshire. In August 2024, several cats exhibited symptoms of poisoning, including a three-year-old cat named Luna, who was ultimately euthanised as a result. The RSPCA has urged the public to be vigilant for signs of poisoning and to store hazardous substances safely, reminding owners that animal poisoning constitutes a criminal offence under the Animal Welfare Act.

Historically, incidents of cat poisonings are not unheard of in Wales. In 2017, a spate of similar cases in Cilgerran, Pembrokeshire, led to at least three confirmed deaths due to acute kidney failure attributed to poisoning. Community members at the time noted an increase in reports of missing pets, prompting the RSPCA to encourage vigilance and community reporting of suspicious activity. Such cases illustrate a broader, concerning trend related to animal safety and welfare that warrants ongoing scrutiny.

In addition to direct acts of cruelty, the emotional toll of cat disappearances weighs heavily on the owners. For instance, Craig Beckerleg's cat, Ringo, was missing for several months before being found over 30 miles away by a rescue charity. Such distressing experiences are compounded by a national rise in pet abductions. A North Wales Member of the Senedd, Sian Gwenllian, recently reported that instances of cat theft have quadrupled since 2015, emphasising the urgency for legislative measures to combat this rising trend. With around 2,300 dog thefts reported in England and Wales in 2023—a staggering increase fueled by the pandemic's impact—the situation for pet safety remains dire.

In a related positive development, advancements in pet identification are gaining traction. The story of Alfie, a ten-year-old cat lost for two years and recently reunited with his owner in Newport, underscores the critical role of microchipping. Following its implementation as a legal requirement for cats in England effective June 2024, many are advocating for similar legislation in Wales. In light of the organisations’ findings, the push for enhanced pet safety measures, including microchipping and robust community awareness, could be crucial steps toward protecting vulnerable pets against both cruelty and unexplained disappearances.

As Wales grapples with these pressing issues, there’s a pressing need for both community vigilance and systemic action to safeguard the welfare of pets, ensuring that beloved companions can return home and remain safe in their neighbourhoods.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2054620/cat-missing-disappearances-wales)
2. Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2054620/cat-missing-disappearances-wales)
3. Paragraph 3: [[2]](https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2024-08-07/warning-issued-after-suspected-cat-poisonings), [[3]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/08/08/cat-poisonings-owners-warned-vigilant-antifreeze-south-wale/), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/cat-killer-could-have-claimed-up-to-20-pets-lives-in-pembrokeshire-village-a3577131.html)
4. Paragraph 4: [[2]](https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2024-08-07/warning-issued-after-suspected-cat-poisonings), [[3]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/08/08/cat-poisonings-owners-warned-vigilant-antifreeze-south-wale/), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/cat-killer-could-have-claimed-up-to-20-pets-lives-in-pembrokeshire-village-a3577131.html)
5. Paragraph 5: [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2054620/cat-missing-disappearances-wales), [[6]](https://www.westwaleschronicle.co.uk/blog/2023/07/27/new-figures-reveal-1072-cat-cruelty-reports-made-to-rspca-in-wales-last-year/), [[7]](https://www.wrexham.com/news/wales-risks-falling-behind-on-pet-abduction-warns-north-wales-member-of-the-senedd-263466.html)
6. Paragraph 6: [[5]](https://www.westwaleschronicle.co.uk/blog/2024/04/18/welsh-cat-reunited-with-owner-after-two-years-thanks-to-microchip/)
7. Paragraph 7: [[7]](https://www.wrexham.com/news/wales-risks-falling-behind-on-pet-abduction-warns-north-wales-member-of-the-senedd-263466.html)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2054620/cat-missing-disappearances-wales> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2024-08-07/warning-issued-after-suspected-cat-poisonings> - In August 2024, RSPCA Cymru issued a warning to pet owners in Kidwelly, Carmarthenshire, after several cats were suspected of being poisoned. One cat, Luna, was found unwell and later euthanized due to poisoning. The RSPCA urged the community to be vigilant and aware of poisoning symptoms, advising immediate veterinary attention if poisoning is suspected. They also appealed for information and emphasized responsible storage of chemicals and hazardous substances to prevent such incidents. The RSPCA highlighted that poisoning an animal is a criminal offense under the Animal Welfare Act.
3. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/08/08/cat-poisonings-owners-warned-vigilant-antifreeze-south-wale/> - In August 2024, cat owners in Kidwelly, Carmarthenshire, were advised to stay vigilant amid a series of suspected poisonings. The RSPCA investigated incidents where cats exhibited symptoms of poisoning, including Luna, a three-year-old cat who was euthanized after being found unwell. The RSPCA urged the community to be aware of poisoning symptoms and to seek immediate veterinary care if poisoning is suspected. They also appealed for information and reminded pet owners to store chemicals securely to prevent such incidents. Poisoning an animal is a criminal offense under the Animal Welfare Act.
4. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/cat-killer-could-have-claimed-up-to-20-pets-lives-in-pembrokeshire-village-a3577131.html> - In June 2017, a spate of cat poisonings in Cilgerran, Pembrokeshire, led to the deaths of at least three cats from acute kidney failure, a sign of poisoning. The RSPCA launched an investigation into the deaths and reports of missing cats in the area. Local resident Katina Andreou noted an unusual number of missing cat reports in the small village. The RSPCA urged the community to be vigilant and report any suspicious activity, emphasizing the importance of keeping pets safe and monitoring their health for signs of poisoning.
5. <https://www.westwaleschronicle.co.uk/blog/2024/04/18/welsh-cat-reunited-with-owner-after-two-years-thanks-to-microchip/> - In April 2024, a ten-year-old cat named Alfie from Newport, South Wales, was reunited with his owner after being missing for over two years. Alfie was found six miles from home and identified through his microchip. His owner, Nicola Selwood-Parry, had searched extensively for Alfie after his disappearance in February 2022. The reunion highlights the importance of microchipping pets and keeping contact details updated. The article also notes that microchipping is set to become a legal requirement for pet cats in England from June 2024, with calls for similar legislation in Wales.
6. <https://www.westwaleschronicle.co.uk/blog/2023/07/27/new-figures-reveal-1072-cat-cruelty-reports-made-to-rspca-in-wales-last-year/> - In July 2023, the RSPCA reported a significant increase in cat cruelty cases in Wales, with 1,072 reports made in the previous year. The charity expressed concern over the rising numbers, attributing the increase to factors such as the cost of living crisis and post-pandemic challenges. The RSPCA emphasized the need for public support to address animal cruelty and urged people to donate to their 'Cancel Out Cruelty' campaign. The article also highlights the strain on animal welfare services due to the rising number of cases.
7. <https://www.wrexham.com/news/wales-risks-falling-behind-on-pet-abduction-warns-north-wales-member-of-the-senedd-263466.html> - In January 2024, a North Wales Member of the Senedd, Sian Gwenllian, warned that Wales risks falling behind on addressing pet abduction. She highlighted the trauma caused to owners when pets are stolen and noted that instances of cat theft have quadrupled since 2015. Gwenllian emphasized the need for legislation to curb the increase in pet thefts, which are often driven by the rising price of kittens. The article also mentions that in 2023, there were an estimated 2,300 dog thefts in England and Wales, with a 170% surge during the pandemic.