All about Battersea Dogs & Cats Home
Introduction

We’re Bat and Zee and we’re here to tell you all about Battersea Dogs & Cats Home, Britain’s most famous home for lost and unwanted dogs and cats.

Every year, thousands of dogs and cats come to Battersea. During their stay, each and every one is given lots of love, care and attention. Since the Home opened in 1860 we have cared for over three million dogs and cats.

The Home aims never to turn away a dog or cat in need of our help, reunites lost dogs and cats with their owners or cares for them until new homes can be found for them.

In addition to the main London site, there are two other centres based in the countryside in Old Windsor, Berkshire and Brands Hatch in Kent.

Why do dogs & cats arrive at Battersea?

The dogs and cats that arrive at Battersea are either lost animals or brought in by their owners. Lost pets are known as strays, which may have been found wandering the streets of London and so we will know nothing about their past. Sometimes owners have to give their pets to the Home because they cannot care for them any longer. This may be for lots of different reasons such as the owners going back to full-time work, moving house, having a new baby… or because the owner cannot deal with the dog or cat’s behaviour.
History

In 1860 Mrs Mary Tealby was walking to a friend’s house when she saw an abandoned, starving puppy. She took the puppy home and, with the help of her friend, nursed him back to health. She was so worried by the number of dogs wandering the streets that she opened ‘The Temporary Home for Lost and Starving Dogs’ in a stable yard in Holloway, North London.

In 1871 the Home moved to its present site in Battersea and was renamed ‘The Dogs’ Home Battersea’. The Home started looking after cats in 1883 and has been caring for and rehoming them ever since. As the Home looks after so many cats, in 2005 it was renamed ‘Battersea Dogs & Cats Home’.

Did you know?
Battersea Dogs & Cats Home is rumoured to have its very own ghost. Mary Tealby is said to walk the corridors of the Home at night – checking on the animals!

Rescue

The Home has been rescuing stray and unwanted dogs for over 150 years, and cats for over 125 years.

Dogs and cats brought to Battersea are given the best possible care. If they are sick or injured they receive expert medical attention from the veterinary staff. Each animal is given a name and number and entered onto the computer system.

The kennels and cattery are kept clean and dry and dogs and cats are given clean blankets every day.

If the animals are dirty or their fur is matted, one of the groomers will spend time washing and grooming them. This will help to make them more comfortable.
Lost & Found

When a stray dog or cat arrives at Battersea, the owner has seven days to claim it.

Battersea has a website and special telephone service, called the Lost Dogs & Cats Line, devoted to finding the owners of lost pets. The staff work with local authority animal wardens, other charities and veterinary surgeries to try and match the lost pet with its owner.

The staff will take details of where someone has lost their dog or cat, what it looks like, its name and any unusual features. The computer system will then help to match owners with the strays that have been found.

Did you know?
In some cases Battersea manages to reunite lost pets with their owners before the dog or cat arrives at Battersea Dogs & Cats Home.

Behaviour & Training

Some of the dogs that arrive at Battersea may not have been well trained or have picked up some bad habits. In some cases they have been mistreated and can be very nervous of people.

All dogs and cats are assessed by trained staff.

Staff create special programmes for dogs and cats so they can adapt to life in the kennels and settle in their new homes.
New homes

The main aim of the Home is to find dogs and cats caring, permanent new homes.

Dogs and cats have their own characters and so staff at the Home spend time with every dog and cat getting to know them. This helps to decide the type of home that the dog or cat needs. They are also each given a thorough health check.

Battersea staff have been specially trained to help people find their perfect dog or cat and will spend lots of time with anyone wishing to rehome an animal.

Working at Battersea Dogs & Cats Home

There are many people who work at Battersea, doing lots of different jobs. A few of them are described below.

**Rehoming and Welfare Assistants (RWA)**
This is one of the most important jobs at the Home. Rehoming and Welfare Assistants or RWAs help to care for, clean, feed and exercise the dogs and cats and find the dogs and cats new homes.

**Veterinary staff**
The Vets and Nurses make sure that all the animals are in good health and receive any medical treatment that they need.

There are many other jobs at Battersea Dogs & Cats Home, but the most important thing about anyone who works at the Home is that they love dogs and cats! If you want to find out about other jobs at Battersea log onto www.battersea.org.uk

**Did you know?**
Battersea also has a computer system that helps to match the dog or cat to the right owner.

**Did you know?**
There are around 300 staff and over 600 volunteers working at Battersea across the three centres. Most of them work directly with the dogs and cats.
How you can help

Fundraising is a great way to help the dogs and cats in Battersea’s care. Sponsored events are always popular – walks, swims, and silences are all fun ideas.

If you decide to help the Home, you should always contact the Fundraising team first. This is very important as Battersea needs to make any fundraising official.

There are lots of ideas on how you can help the Home on the website at www.battersea.org.uk

Questions and answers

How do the dogs and cats get their names?
The staff that care for the stray dogs and cats usually name them. The names given will often follow a theme depending on the time of year and events that are occurring at the time.

How many dogs and cats do you usually have at any one time?
There are usually around 450 dogs and 150 cats at the Home.

Is Christmas the busiest time of year?
Battersea’s busiest period is the summer months for a number of reasons, partly due to people not making proper plans for their pet when they go away on holiday.

Can we visit Battersea Dogs & Cats Home?
Yes, you and your family can visit any of the three centres. The Home is open 10.30am to 4pm on weekends and public holidays and 1pm–4pm, Monday to Friday.

School visits can be arranged through the Home’s Education Team who can be contacted by emailing education@battersea.org.uk

The Home is closed on occasional days throughout the year so please check the website, www.battersea.org.uk before visiting. The website also has maps and directions to the three centres and lots of useful information about the Home including a section dedicated to kids.