




Bringing pets and people closer together

Wood Green Strategy

2020 - 2025



“ Josie was extremely helpful and patient with us while we chose the right cat, she also contacted another branch for us and sorted everything out. We could not be happier and will definitely be recommending Wood Green to other people based on the service today ”

Connor, Pet Owner

Welcome

This five-year strategy marks the centenary of Wood Green's creation and sets the scene for the next hundred years. It looks ahead with ambition and a sense of purpose but, at the same time, preserves the founding values that have stood us in good stead throughout our history.

Style and substance are the hallmarks of the next five years. Style, in that we will work in a way that is authentic to our values, but sympathetic to the needs and expectations of our customers, pets and people. Substance, in that the strategy looks to significantly expand and develop the services we provide, both in the care we give to pets but also in the support and guidance we will provide to people and our communities. This strategy transitions Wood Green into a new era, the next hundred years, a period in which we want to do more than maintain the status quo.

Wood Green was created in 1924 to address a need. Its success was born from a fundamental premise that the services it offered were relevant to the needs of people and pets. But we live in a society that is constantly changing, and in turn the expectations on Wood Green, and indeed many other charities, have evolved in many ways. While the nature of expectations may be different, the underlying need for high quality care and support remains as important today as the day we started, and so the scale and scope of our work continues to develop and grow.

Our work at Wood Green is reflective of a simple approach. We will continue to address existing issues and symptoms through the care we provide to our pets while, at the same time, proactively work with our communities and pet owners to tackle the root cause of these issues. It is my belief that a true measure of our success in the next hundred years will not only be the degree and sophistication of the care we provide, but also to what extent we collaborate with people, individually and collectively, and influence their attitudes towards pets. Being responsible for their actions and decisions is not only important for pet owners, it is a necessity for healthy communities more broadly.

Fundamentally, we believe that by caring for both pets and people, we can bring them together for mutual benefit and, by implication, enrich the communities in which they both live. This is the commitment we set out in this strategy, and one that sets the tone for the next hundred years of our work.



Clive Byles
Chief Executive

About Us

We are a pet charity that makes a difference to the lives of pets and people across the UK. Here at Wood Green, we pride ourselves on being a multi-species charity, meaning that we can support and care for a broad range of pets that need our help. Our services and activities span across cats, dogs and small pets including rabbits, hamsters, guinea pigs and chickens.

Our team is passionate about supporting as many pets and pet owners as possible. We have unparalleled knowledge and expertise in caring for pets across a large variety of species and helping future and current pet owners in finding and looking after their pets.

We provide a full range of care and rehoming services

All pets have unique characteristics and circumstances. They come in different species, sizes, breeds, ages and genders. Some have owners whilst others do not. The combination of these factors means that all pets will have a different level of need, be it medically, behaviourally or otherwise. We are committed to supporting as many pets as possible. Our services and activities recognise, cater for and meet a variety of pet individual needs.

We provide a holistic suite of targeted and general services to support pet owners throughout their pet journeys, whichever stage they are at

We recognise that the needs and wants of pets and pet owners may differ quite drastically depending on their individual circumstances and where they are at in their pet journey. All pet owners have a unique journey and pet ownership lifecycle, from the very first point of deciding to get a pet through to the point of potentially losing or being separated from their pet. Pet owners need different types of support at each stage of this journey. We aim to provide a central point of contact for all pet owners, delivering a suite of services which are practical and fitting throughout their pet journeys.

If we cannot support our pet owners and seekers directly, we will signpost them to our trusted partners to ensure they receive appropriate advice and support elsewhere

We want to support all pets that come to Wood Green. However, we also recognise that we have limited resources and time. To combat this, we continue to build and develop strong partnerships with other organisations and charities in the sector who have specialist knowledge and expertise in other pet species, such as reptiles and birds.



Our Vision

Our vision is for every pet to have a home where they are loved, well cared for and enjoy positive relationships with their owners

Our Mission

Our mission is to care for vulnerable pets. We are committed to providing our pets with outstanding care and secure and loving homes and supporting pet owners and the wider community to build rewarding relationships with pets

Our Values

At Wood Green, we champion a bespoke and caring approach to everything we do. We work together as a community to move forward, staying true to our values to create the best outcomes for everyone



Passionate

We share your passion for pets and do everything we can to help you achieve the best outcomes for pets



Understanding

We recognise that every pet and pet owner is unique. We are empathetic to everyone's individual needs and support them in the best way possible



Authentic

We know that we are always learning from the pets and pet owners that we serve, and you can trust us to be honest and transparent with everything we do and say



Innovative

We strive to provide solutions that are practical, fit for purpose and will positively help to solve issues for our pets and pet owners



Community

We believe that we can achieve more by working together and are dedicated to serving and engaging with our communities, be it physically or digitally



Ambitious

We are committed to providing the highest quality of care and support, and making sure that our services are easily accessible to anyone who needs or wants them

Changing Landscape

We operate in an environment that is constantly shifting, which means that we must be agile and adapt our services to ensure that we are best meeting the needs of our pets and pet owners, both today and in the future.



Financial Uncertainty and Supporter Expectations

A slowing economic environment and uncertainty surrounding the future of the UK economy have increased the financial vulnerability of the charity sector in many ways. This challenge is particularly pronounced for small and medium sized charities, creating additional pressures to maintain and increase financial support in a landscape that is already seeing fatigue. Recent regulatory changes, like the introduction of GDPR, have challenged charities to find new ways to attract and engage with new and existing supporters.

In addition, changing expectations from beneficiaries and supporters have challenged the sector to increase the pace of delivery to remain relevant. Specifically, technological change has become very relevant for organisations of all types. It presents an opportunity to reach more audiences, but also a need to adapt organisational systems and recruit a balance of technical skills to use and drive technology forward.

To make matters more challenging, recent negative media coverage has chipped away at the public's trust in charitable enterprises. We must now galvanise as a sector to increase transparency, better communicate the impact of our work and rebuild public trust.



Changing Behaviours of Pet Owners

At Wood Green, changing customer behaviours have not only transformed how we need to connect with our customers and supporters, but also what pets and pet owners need from us.

The UK remains a country of pet-lovers. It is estimated that 12 million households (40%) have pets, a number that has remained stable over the past 3 years. However, the nature of pet acquisition has been changing, a growing number of consumers are acquiring their pets based on looks and not suitability to their lifestyle, with little preparation or knowledge of the responsibilities this entails. Increases in vet costs and pet life expectancy add further pressure to the commitment undertaken.

The substantial growth in online platforms for acquiring, selling and rehoming pets has enabled increases in fast-paced demand for pets. With little to no regulation, these places can perpetuate a distressing rise in illegal traders who over-breed pets in appalling conditions, resulting in increasingly complex medical and behavioural needs.

However, the internet has also made it easier to access pet advice. It has become the preferred choice of information for half of pet owners. Unfortunately, the quality of this advice is often variable and may result in pet owners taking actions that harm their pets, despite having the best of intentions.

Change can bring around opportunities, but it is not without its risks, and we must do everything we can to champion and safeguard the health and wellbeing of pets.



“ The Wood Green Centre is amazing and the staff are all so lovely. You really don't have to ask many questions as they cover every avenue so professionally. We are looking forward to our next visit.

Thank you all!

”

John and Janet, Pet Owners

Our Strategy

We have defined five key strategic goals that encapsulate where we want to be in five years. These goals set the foundations for everything we do for our pets and pet owners, and will drive us to ensure we grow closer to achieving our mission.



To ensure that pets and pet owners in need of our help are never turned away



To build a robust and resilient organisation



To provide high quality care for pets in need of our help



To be known and recognised for what we do and our impact



To champion and increase responsible pet acquisition, ownership and relinquishment across the UK

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To ensure that pets and pet owners in need of our help are never turned away

Being a pet owner can be one of the most enriching experiences in our lives, but it's not without its challenges. Most of us experience some type of medical or behavioural problem with our pets, and it is not always clear how best to fix it. If these issues are not addressed, they can quickly escalate and result in risks to pet welfare, despite our best intentions.

This is why we are committed to listening to pets and pet owners to really understand what their needs are and to developing a holistic suite of services that fulfil those needs. We are dedicated to responding to all pets and pet owners in need of our help, whether that involves targeted behavioural support or signposting to one of our trusted partners.

Over the next five years, we will:

- a) Establish and understand the needs of current and future pets and pet owners
- b) Design, build and deliver products and services, based on data and research, that effectively fulfil the needs of pets and pet owners

What we will do to achieve this:

Build up and consolidate insights about pet and pet owner needs based on our daily interactions and market research

- Engage with communities and build up our relationships with pet owners and the wider public, across a range of digital and physical channels, to understand their evolving needs
- Gather data on our pet journeys to create insights into changing medical and behavioural needs, and adapt services and facilities accordingly

Improve and streamline data management by adapting our internal systems and processes to support insights-led product and service design

- Consolidate insights and expertise gathered by building a central repository for case studies and impact-based content to support our research
- Invest in and develop a centralised data platform to facilitate organisational reporting and centralised data management

Develop and provide a holistic suite of products and services for pets and pet owners to ensure we can respond to a full diversity of needs

- Develop a robust methodology and approach to service design, innovation and transformation guided by learnings from our day-to-day activities, engagements and market research
- Consolidate and build up our network of trusted partners on a national and local scale, including other pet charities and businesses, to support our services and signpost any requests that we cannot directly help

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To provide high quality care for pets in need of our help

We are proud of our reputation for providing high quality care and treatment, but we believe we can do more. Our goal is to ensure that the level of care we give, and the place in which we give it, addresses the holistic needs of each individual pet.

Finding the right home for a pet is part and parcel of our treatment plan, and matching pets to people is as crucial as the care we give. Our future treatment plans will always be put together with the pet's needs in mind and focus on proactive and timely rehoming.

Over the next five years, we will:

- a) Provide care, interventions and facilities for Wood Green pets that are designed in accordance with high quality standards
- b) Provide targeted support and guidance for customer-owned pets that are designed in line with their specific needs
- c) Proactively increase the proportion of pets in our care that are successfully matched to new owners and homes

What we will do to achieve this:

Deliver a new pet care operating model that combines onsite and offsite care and provides tailored care to meet the needs of every pet

- Improve and invest in our pet care facilities, accommodation and care enhancements, including a new cattery, to provide consistent high-quality care for the full make up of our pet population, including those with complex medical and behavioural needs
- Pilot and expand new models of care through fostering and owner home care to create and increase offsite capacity and offer a diversity of environments that suit the variable needs of our pets
- Trial a mobilisation network to support pet relinquishments and easily transport pets within our current catchment areas and more widely

Enhance our understanding of how best to care for and rehome individual pets using digital tooling

- Develop and implement robust impact measurement tools to monitor our pets' journeys and assess how their needs have changed, enabling us to make better decisions to improve their care
- Build a new capacity management tool to support intake decisions and the delivery of pet care, ensuring that pets receive appropriate care at the right time in the right place
- Develop and implement a profiling tool that enables us to proactively find the best homes for our pets and build long-lasting relationships

Build strong partnerships in our community to support pet care delivery

- Develop and consolidate our partnerships with veterinary providers and other pet-related organisations to support our pet care provisions and services



Eleni and Odin

I remember when Odin arrived. An 8-week old kitten who had suffered a bad fall from a balcony three days prior. His owner couldn't assume the responsibility and handed him over to Wood Green. He was in pain, with a prolapsed eye and a huge swollen head that he could barely hold up, sitting quietly in his carrier needing urgent help.

We assessed the situation and immediately he was seen by a vet. At the time, we couldn't determine if he would go completely blind. That same evening he had emergency surgery where sadly his left eye had to be removed, it was just too badly damaged to function, but thankfully his right eye was fine. After three days of care and monitoring, Odin came home with me on foster. My family and I followed his progress and, despite a few bumps and some balance loss, this little guy soon adapted to his new condition.

We became so fond of him that it took us less than two weeks to formally adopt him. At his new home, he has settled in well and has grown up to become a big tough cat, or so he thinks.

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To champion and increase responsible pet acquisition, ownership and relinquishment across the UK

Every pet's wellbeing is related to the quality of its care. We recognise that if we are to improve the wellbeing of pets, we need to influence the behaviour of people and pet owners. This means we must understand why people do the things they do, how they can change, and the ways in which we communicate with them to bring about that change.

Better connections with people will mean better outcomes for pets. We want to encourage the development of a society that understands how to meet pets' health and wellbeing needs and recognises the benefits they bring to our lives.

Over the next five years, we will:

- a) Deliver and promote existing Wood Green services, information and support resources
- b) Increase access to our services at scale across our regions, and more broadly through digital channels
- c) Develop a community engagement programme, including partnerships with relevant organisations

What we will do to achieve this:

Deliver and promote a holistic suite of services that supports people throughout their pet ownership journey


- Launch a new pet seeker tool that informs and helps customers from the very beginning of their search for a pet and supports them to make appropriate decisions
- Implement a centralised advice centre where people can ask Wood Green for any pet-related guidance or help, irrespective of the size or nature of their enquiry
- Utilise digital solutions to increase the outreach of our services to audiences who cannot access our physical sites, and explore the viability of an online platform that promotes responsible relinquishment

Provide a new and improved customer service experience across all channels

- Leverage digital solutions to provide enhanced customer services and ensure a smooth, consistent and high-quality experience across all channels, irrespective of whether we have been approached through the telephone, website or in-person at one of our sites
- Develop our engagement touchpoints to provide an enriching customer experience and offer new services, such as off-lead exercise areas, to support pet owners

Expand and strengthen our relationships with the community through a blend of tailored activities and engagement opportunities

- Implement a structured community engagement model that is bespoke to the needs of our communities, works in harmony with our external partners, delivers proven impact, and ultimately has the potential to scale in the future
- Deliver focused support materials and activities in local communities based on the individual needs of that community
- Develop and pilot the creation of a wider hub model that integrates a range of community activities and engagement opportunities to facilitate and expand our service delivery



Anna and Molly

I spent just under a year looking for a dog that could live with my two dog-savvy cats. Molly arrived and within hours my fluff ball had me exhausted, I felt out of my depth. A Wood Green home visit advised me step by step. Little tips worked wonders. These experts had seen it all before and it was reassuring to learn I wasn't alone in finding life with a puppy demanding.

When I became pregnant, Molly's behaviour became more challenging. She bit a dog whilst off lead on a walk. I was devastated, hormonal and emotional. An appointment with Wood Green gave me some non-judgemental advice that was even tailored to suit my rapidly expanding pregnant belly.

At seven and a half, Molly has mellowed into a fabulous family dog. My children and I love her to pieces and are infinitely grateful to the amazing advice and support we have received from Wood Green, without which our journey would have looked very different, with very different outcomes.

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To build a robust and resilient organisation

Our ability to deliver this ambitious strategy is rooted in having a strong foundation of infrastructure, resources and capabilities. Staff and volunteers are at the core of our organisation, and we must continuously invest in the skills and expertise of our team to ensure they can deliver the highest quality of services, wherever they sit in the organisation.

We operate in a highly complex and challenging environment, which means that we need to work in a smart way and leverage technology and information to the best of our ability. By using our resources more efficiently, we will be able to care for more people and pets and have a greater impact in the long run.

Over the next five years, we will:

- a) Ensure that the configuration of our sites and facilities are appropriate and meet high quality standards
- b) Transform our organisational information technology to support services and operations
- c) Become financially and operationally sustainable
- d) Build and maintain a skilled, engaged and expert workforce, and work together to deliver the best outcomes
- e) Develop a service transformation and innovation capability that drives increased impact and continuous improvement
- f) Create and implement an impact framework in line with our strategy



4

To build a robust and resilient organisation

What we will do to achieve this:

Invest in the continuous development of our staff and volunteers to expand their skills, knowledge and expertise and retain key talent

- Provide the right support and opportunities for our team to grow and upskill, ensuring that we have a well-rounded team who can cover all areas of expertise and deliver the highest quality of services to our pets, pet owners and supporters
- Develop and implement a structured volunteer programme, across and beyond our delivery and retail sites, to create valuable and meaningful volunteering experiences
- Offer training experience for veterinary students, introduce and eventually scale a new apprenticeship scheme, helping to build and nurture the future leaders of tomorrow
- Build and promote our Wood Green values and ethos, and support our staff and volunteers to be our biggest ambassadors

Build our physical infrastructure and internal systems to support, elevate and increase the impact of our service delivery

- Review and develop the configuration of our sites to ensure that we have the right facilities in the right place for our customers and supporters
- Invest strategically in our information and technology systems and applications to enable us to work more effectively across all aspects of the charity
- Develop a robust methodology and approach to service design, innovation and transformation guided by learnings from our daily engagements and market research
- Design and implement an impact framework that aligns with our strategy, and measures and demonstrates the impact of our work

Consolidate and diversify our income through the exploration of new fundraising channels and services

- Develop and scale opportunities for individual giving and support, including a regional fundraising group programme and new fundraising activities such as lotteries, online activities and mass participation events
- Grow our support from major donors, trusts and foundations through the launch of appeals focussed on well-grounded projects and initiatives that enhance our services and facilities
- Encourage more individuals to support our work with pets and pet owners by leaving a gift in their will
- Increase the funds raised from our retail sites and explore the viability of new commercial pet services and online retail offerings



“ When our old dog died I missed him terribly, but we decided not to have another. Volunteering at Wood Green means I get my ‘doggy fix’ at the same time as helping a good cause ”

Ann, Volunteer

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Be known and recognised for what we do and our impact

We are proud of what we do at Wood Green and the impact we have on the people and pets we support. Our team has unparalleled knowledge and expertise in caring for pets across a large variety of species and helping future and current pet owners in finding and looking after their pets.

We want to be able to share this expertise with anyone who needs or wants it. We want to create an environment where people can always turn to Wood Green for help, irrespective of the size or nature of their question. For as long as we exist, we will champion pet welfare and ensure that our services are understood and accessible to all audiences.

Over the next five years, we will:

- a) Develop and implement a brand strategy that supports the needs of our organisation
- b) Establish ourselves as the first point of contact for pet and pet owner support

What we will do to achieve this:

Improve the way we connect and engage with our customers and supporters, and expand our reach through new channels

- Review and develop a new brand strategy which enables us to better connect with our customers and supporters, expand our reach to new audiences, and increase our understanding of who we are and what we do
- Utilise new digital solutions and services to increase our outreach to new virtual environments, enhance our customer services and provide new engagement opportunities
- Provide a central, easy access point for all enquiries coming into Wood Green across different channels, including the telephone, web and face-to-face interactions

Continue to promote and communicate what we do and the impact of our work

- Build up our presence and reputation across our regions and local communities to increase the understanding of our services and ensure that we are recognised as an accessible point of support in times of need
- Capture and share stories and case studies to showcase the impact of our work with pets and pet owners and celebrate good practice

Join our Wood Green Community!

Volunteer

Volunteer at one of our high street stores or spend time working with pets – you'll help us make an even bigger difference.

Work with us

Check out our job listings - we are always on the look out for passionate, talented individuals for a wide variety of roles.

Foster a pet

Fostering is a great way to give our pets some extra love and respite while they are waiting for their forever home.

Donate

Your donation will open doors for thousands of homeless pets in need. Call us on **0300 303 9876** to donate today.

Wood Green, The Animals Charity

#askwoodgreen

woodgreen.org.uk

King's Bush Farm, Cambridgeshire PE29 2NH

0300 303 9333

