

CAT ADOPTION PROCESS

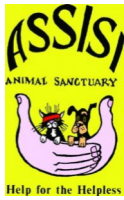
- Once you complete your application form, a member of the cat staff will come and talk to you about your application.
- There may be a range of factors in the household that would influence what kind of cat we could rehome to you (e.g. young children who would be scared of a boisterous cat, a dog with no cat experience).
- You are more than welcome to take a look at the cats, but you cannot make any specific bookings at this point.
- You must first have your vet check (if applicable); landlord check (if applicable) and a home advisor will be assigned to assess your home and the area it is in. Once these checks are completed you will be advised of what cats we have that are suitable for your home based upon the above criteria.
- **Depending upon the outcome, a housecat may be suggested. We will provide our housecat leaflet if you wish to read in the meantime.**

The next stage:

- Once we have the results of the checks, a staff member will contact you with options of which cat/s have been approved, and you can look at them further online.
- Your approved form will be left for collection in the cat unit.
- Should you wish to choose one of the cat options available to you, you will be invited to come and collect your approved form, which should have your list of approved cats written on it so that any staff member can show them to you.
- You can then choose your cat/s (all the family must come to meet the cat) and you will be invited to either collect within 24/48 hours (you can also collect later in the week if more suitable for you), or at a set later date if medication needs to be ordered. (this could take 2/3 days depending on when you want to collect the cat as an appointment may be necessary with our vet to sign the cats medication over to you)
- If for any reason we do not have a suitable cat for you, but think we may do in the future, your form will be held until a suitable cat is available.

IF YOU ARE NO LONGER ABLE TO CARE FOR IT ASSISI WILL RECLAIM OWNERSHIP OF THE CAT

A SPACE MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE ON THE DAY YOU CONTACT US BUT ANY EX-ASSISI ANIMALS WILL BE A PRIORITY FOR RETURN SPACE AS SOON AS ONE BECOMES AVAILABLE.



ADVICE ON HELPING YOU AND YOUR CAT SETTLE IN TOGETHER

What you will need

- Make sure your kitten has a warm and comfortable bed and perhaps a small cuddly toy
- An adult cat also needs a warm, secure bed to retreat to when tired.
- Have a litter tray in the same room as the bed.

Bringing the cat/kitten home

The cat/kitten will need a quiet, separate area to acclimatise to the household. This could take several days.

- When you bring a new cat/kitten into your home remember that it will be scared and may run under the furniture or behind a seat. Do not force it out as this will terrify it even more. Just talk softly to it and be patient. It will come out of its own accord.
- After a period of a few hours leave some food out.
- Have a litter tray nearby.
- Some cats/kittens may never have been in a house before and the noises associated with your home e.g. television, washing machine, vacuum cleaner etc, will be alien to their sensitive hearing.
- Showing patience and understanding at the beginning will be rewarded by a pet that is confident in the love and protection of a new family.

Feeding/Litter trays

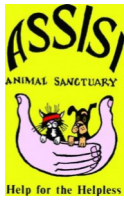
- Feed kittens 3 times per day. Adult cats should be fed twice daily.
- Give a clean dish at each meal and have fresh water always available.
- Cats and kittens at the Sanctuary are not given milk and are used to water. We do not advise you give the cat/kitten milk. **All cats/kittens cannot digest milk and it is not essential for their diet. Fresh water is.**
- Have a litter tray easily accessible to the cat/kitten, but not close to its food. The cat/kitten will do its best to use the litter tray, but needs to know where to find it.
- Do not hit the cat/kitten if an accident happens as it will not understand why it is being punished and love and confidence will be replaced by fear and uncertainty. Remember the cat/kitten is still learning.
- Check for reasons that prevented the cat/kitten using the litter tray. An example might be accessibility i.e. the door to the room where the litter tray was positioned was closed. Another could be that the tray was already soiled.

Safety in the home

- A cat/kitten in a new home will want to explore. You must protect it from danger e.g. open fires, electric cables, chimneys, hot plates on cooker, washing machines, tumble dryers, plastic bags, sewing threads (which can be swallowed and cause twisting in the intestine) etc. All these hazards could result in a fatality, so it is your responsibility to make sure that your pet is kept free from harm.
- Watch where you walk when you have a kitten. If you accidentally stood on it you could crush its fragile body.
- Make sure the toilet seat is down and never let a cat/kitten into the bathroom when you are running a bath as it could jump in the water and get badly scalded.

Settling in period.

- Remember to give an adult cat time to settle in (weeks, not hours or days). The cat may have been previously abandoned or lost from a loving home. It is a strange new world and the cat needs time to adjust.



- The cat may not be used to children who are continually trying to play with it or grab at it so may get frightened and strike out. If you have children make sure they respect the cat's space.
- If you are introducing a cat/kitten into a household which already has a resident pet, always take time to introduce them gradually. Ideally let your new cat have one room and the resident pet the rest of the house for a few days.
- Let your resident pet come into limited contact with the new arrival and gradually build up the access period each day. If your resident pet does not feel threatened by the new arrival, it increases the chances of friendship between them. The last thing you want is for your original pet to feel threatened. This will result in fighting and marking of territory or, worse still, bullying which could cause either of the animals to leave home.

Letting the cat out

If you have adopted a housecat, they are indoor only and are not to be let outside.

We do not advocate taking a housecat out on a lead.

- After a minimum of eight weeks for an adult cat (**6 months for a kitten**) you may let the cat out for a short supervised time. This is best done prior to a meal. A hungry cat is less likely to stray.
- Always have the cat in before nightfall, a more dangerous time for cats.
- When fitting a collar, make sure it is not too tight; you should be able to put your finger between the collar and the cat's neck. Check a growing kitten's collar weekly.
- Patience has its rewards and with time to adjust, the rewards will be great – a contented loving cat and a happy family.
- **If you have a problem contact the Sanctuary (028 9181 2622) we will be pleased to help in any way.**
- **If you are worried about your cat's health, contact your vet for advice.**

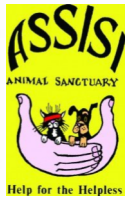
The following food is normal diet for Assisi Adult Cats:

- Royal Canin Adult Dry
- Whiskas / Kit-e-kat various flavours in jelly or gravy
- Whiskas / Kit-e-kat pouches
- Tuna / Chicken as a treat or giving medication.
- Water available at all times.
- Feed as advised
- Leave a small bowl of dry food available during the day

Other necessary items are -

- Litter tray
- Litter scoop
- Litter (good quality wood based)
- Scratch post. If a house cat then invest in a good quality one, essentially tall, different levels and hiding places.
- Three bowls, one each for wet food, dry food and water.
- Distance toys (dangly things on a stick). Not toys that will encourage hands getting scratched or bitten in play.
- Comb/brush – advice given on correct grooming

For any follow up advice or if there are any problems contact the Main Cattery on: **028 9181 2622**



Guidance Sheets for Cats / Kittens

First Steps

Necessary Items to buy before you bring your pet home.

Cat Carrier

Food

Litter Tray

Litter Scoop

Scratching Post

Two bowls, one double bowl for wet food and water, one single bowl for dry food.

Toys, if a kitten, then this should include a soft cuddly toy to help settle the kitten from being separated from their siblings. Distance toys .

Bed with Blanket

You will need a spare room to keep the kitten/cat in to help settle in to their new environment. This room is their safe haven and will make their introduction to the house easier without any stress.(preferably for a kitten not a utility room. Noise from a washing machine or tumble dryer can frighten a small kitten.)

keep the bed with a blanket on, litter tray and food in this room and do not let out until the kitten / cat has bonded with you and seems more confident to cope with the rest of the house . If the house is busy or has other animals this process may take longer.

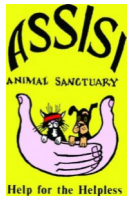
Feeding Guide

Kittens (up to 3 months) Half a kitten pouch 3 times a day.Small Handful of kitten dry food at breakfast top up if eaten at dinner time.

Kittens (3 to 9 months) Full pouch of kitten food 3 times a day. Handful of kitten dry if eaten twice a day.

Adult (9 months plus) Full pouch of adult food twice a day. Handful of adult dry food if eaten twice a day.

Never give a kitten or an adult cat, cow, goat or sheep milk it upsets their digestion process.



Guidance Sheets for Cats/Kittens

Housecats

Housecats are cats who stay totally inside and never go out. Keeping Housecats can give you peace of mind knowing that they are safe from harm and not roaming the streets.

Other reasons for keeping Housecats are :

High Traffic Area - If you live close to a busy / main road.

High- Rise Flat / 1st floor apartment

Health Issues - old age or sickness i.e the cat has FIV/FELV, restricted sight or hearing loss.

Areas of Concern - We do get updates of areas that have reports of animal cruelty. In that instance we would suggest an indoor only cat / Kitten.

Housecats are sometimes not practical for everyone, these are the things you have to consider:

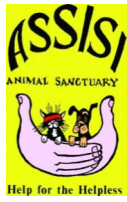
You cannot open windows to air the house(unless your windows are treated with special cat proof catches)

You cannot leave the front or back doors to the house open at any time.

Does the whole house agree to keeping the doors , windows closed?

Be aware of open washing machines, tumble dryers and toilet lids, string on vertical / horizontal blinds , cupboards containing household cleaners full bath tub all dangerous for a cat / kitten.

Cats can adapt well to indoor life if they are kept inside from a young age and have never experienced outdoors. We would **not** recommend keeping cats that are used to going outside as housecats except for health reasons as this would cause the cat to become very stressed. If you are looking to adopt a house kitten, consider a sibling pair so they can keep each other company.



Indoor environments can become predictable and boring, leading to stress(toileting issues and overgrooming) inactivity and obesity. It is important you provide your cat with everything it may need. When keeping Housecats you will need to ;

Provide a litter tray in a quiet place and clean it daily. Cats are often reluctant to use a dirty tray or a tray located in a busy area.

Ensure your cat has enough space. Housecats should have access throughout the house.

Allow your cat access to two types of resting places, one at floor level and another one higher with a good view. It is important the higher position is safe and won't allow your cat to fall.

Enviromental enrichment is very important add indoor grass grown in pots for the cat to chew on as this also helps with hairballs. Outdoor bird feeder in the garden will bring birds in to the garden which they will love to watch and keep their minds active.

Provide adequately sized scratching posts in several different locations around your home so they can mark territory / strengthen muscles / sharpen claws. This will also discourage the cat from using the furniture to scratch.

Provide opportunities for daily exercise to stay fit and healthy. Do not overfeed, housecats have a tendency to be plump due to lack of movement.

Create new ways for your cat to stay stimulated and active, both physically and mentally. Make meal times less predictable, there are food bowls on the market that make the cat work for the food.

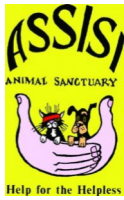
Laser pens are great for movement and play. The old favourite, a card board box is an inexpensive hide and seek toy.

Cat wands are great for teaching kittens not to play with hands and are great for interaction between all family members.

We do not advise taking Housecats out on a harness, this can be a very stressful experience and make a housecat very confused and upset about being back indoors.

Taking a housecat out on a lead is strictly forbidden under the Assisi Rehoming Contract as it will:

- Encourage a housecat to look for outside access
- Put the cat at undue risk should it get away from you
- Cause the cat undue stress and cause stress-related health issues.



Introducing a Cat to your Dog

Cats are very sensitive creatures. When you are introducing a new kitten or a cat to a resident dog it has to be done slowly and with care. A cat can move out if it feels too stressed or threatened by resident animals in the house.

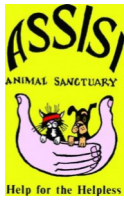
We have advised that you keep the cat / kitten in a spare room to settle into the house.

Once you feel they have a bond with you and are relaxed in your presence and have had plenty of time to settle, you can think about switching blankets or a toy with each other's smell on it. This is a good way of letting both animals know that there is a new member in the household.

Make sure that there will be places in your home where your cat can go but your dog cannot. These are where your cat can escape to, relax and get some peace and quiet. Do not leave your dog and cat unattended in the same room until the slow introduction process has been successful.

Dogs love cat food so it would be advisable never to leave the cat food in easy reach of your dog.

Please note sanctuary cats and kittens have come from different backgrounds and most of them have been through a stressful experience and will need plenty of time to adjust to a new family and existing pets.



New Baby

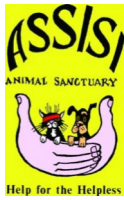
If your cat has existing behavioural problems which you have previously 'put up with' now is the time to get them sorted out as it is likely they will only worsen with the upheaval and disruption caused by a tiny baby.

If your relationship with your cat has been very close, it may well be difficult to find the time to sustain the same degree of affection once the new baby arrives. So it would be sensible and kinder to your cat to dilute the emotional intensity between you well in advance. Anticipate your new timetable and establish a different routine for your cat which you are fairly confident you will be able to sustain in the future. Introduce changes gradually to minimise the impact. If your cat is used to undivided attention for much of the time, withdraw it initially for short periods as far in advance of the baby's arrival as possible. You can gradually lengthen the periods of withdrawal at a rate which reflects your cat's ability to cope. Instigate times of structured play or grooming to suit your new timetable and your cat's needs, but if he appears aroused or stressed, don't impose your attentions on him as he will only become more upset and may even lash out at you.

Often the room which is to be the nursery is one to which the cat has been allowed free access. It is advisable for this to be prevented well before the baby actually takes up residence. To reduce adverse reaction to the change and to prevent 'barrier frustration', spray the closed door and its frame with Feliway or rub with 'facial cloths'. Don't forget that indoor cats will be more affected by even small changes in their environment, territory and lifestyle, than those with access to the outdoors.

The feline olfactory system is very sensitive and scent is an important means of communication in the domestic cat. Thus any disturbance in the scent profile of a cat's territory can have a major impact and cause real distress to a pet. This is frequently unrecognised, but explains why equipment for the baby, acquired in advance of his or her arrival, often becomes the target for urination or spraying, as a cat attempts to reassure itself by 'marking' the articles with its own scent in this way. Pheromone preparations can also, therefore, be usefully applied to such baby things as buggies, cots and highchairs. For this reason it is worth acquiring from friends and relatives as many everyday baby items as possible so that your cat can be introduced ahead of time to the wide range of often pungent odours he will later encounter! These may be minimal to us, with our poor sense of smell, but could represent a major stressful intrusion for a cat. Bringing the things into the home in a gradual and controlled way should not only reduce any aversive qualities associated with them by allowing your cat to adjust slowly to their presence, but should help you by creating opportunities to condition positive associations by, for instance, offering tasty food or indulging in a favourite game, when something first arrives.

When your baby arrives, try to set aside time for your cat and stick to his established routines. Predictability is very important to felines. If you are simply too busy to cope with the demands of both baby and cat, consider inviting friends or family known to him to provide one-to-one sessions of play or grooming.



If your cat tries to run away from your children never try to thwart him. Flight is a natural feline reaction to anything strange. If you try to restrain him, it will cause him stress and fear could spill into aggression if he believes that he is trapped and has lost control of the situation.

This is especially important when you first bring the baby home. If you have undertaken the preparation detailed above, the cat will hopefully not be too averse to the new arrival. But installing plug-in Feliway diffusers at various points in the home, particularly areas associated with the baby, should help to provide reassurance. You may also win him over by offering him favoured food which is not normally available.

It is worth remembering the essential 'rules' of never reassuring a pet's anxiety or fear, as this will only make it worse. But reinforce relaxed behaviour by your cat in the face of any potential stressor with praise, petting, play or food.

A cat's hearing, like its sense of smell, is very much better than ours, so it would be worth playing, initially at low volume, tapes of baby noises – crying, gurgling, squealing etc. Again, reward the behaviour you wish to encourage and only increase the volume gradually as your cat indicates that he can cope.

It is, of course, helpful to have babies and young children visit your home, but choose the latter with care. Cats can find the experience overwhelming if confronted by youngsters who insist on pursuing them. Always supervise encounters and ensure that any handling is gentle and appropriate. Children should never be allowed to try and pick up a cat they are not strong enough to hold comfortably. They should always be shown how to support the pet's full weight with a hand under his bottom so that he is never allowed to dangle from his front legs. Remember too, that some conscientious children, when told not to let a kitten or small cat fall, inadvertently squeeze too hard so that their good intentions hurt the animal as much as those of the child who is rough and uncaring.

It is best to stick to hands-off interaction, such as playing with fishing rod toys, balls or a torchlight against the wall, sitting quietly near a cat or perhaps giving him a gentle stroke or grooming if the cat concerned won't find that too intrusive. Again, making the experience pleasurable by reinforcement with praise or a treat can help to consolidate the positive associations for the cat with the presence of small humans.

Never let anyone, including children, encourage a cat or kitten to play directly with fingers, toes or any other part of the human anatomy. This can lead, albeit unintentionally, to injury at a later date and sometimes to problems with aggression.

Some cats become more concerned about children when they are mobile than when they are tiny babies. A crawling or toddling child can take a cat by surprise and his or her squeals and shrieks can be frightening for a feline. Providing places of retreat for the cat is even more important at this stage.

Finally, children should never be brought up, even inadvertently, to view pets as playthings. From the outset they must be taught to respect the cat, to approach and handle him appropriately and well because ultimately there are so many benefits and pleasures to be derived from growing up in a family with a well-adjusted companion animal.