

# Animal Welfare Code for Cats Consultation Responses

## We Asked

The purpose of the consultation by the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture (DEFA) was to seek views on the draft Animal Welfare Code of Practice for Cats.

The purpose of the Animal Welfare Code of Practice for Cats, is to provide practical guidance to help the public comply with the provisions of Section 6 of the Animal Welfare Act 2023. It does not tell people precisely how to care for a cat, but summarises important things you should consider when making decisions about how best to care for a cat. The codes have been deliberately left vague in some areas because of the wide range of cats this code applies to. There will be significant differences in how you should look after a pedigree kitten compared to a farm cat.

Breach of a provision of the code is not an offence in itself but if proceedings are brought against someone under the Animal Welfare Act 2023, the Court may look at whether or not they have complied with the Code in deciding whether they have committed an offence.

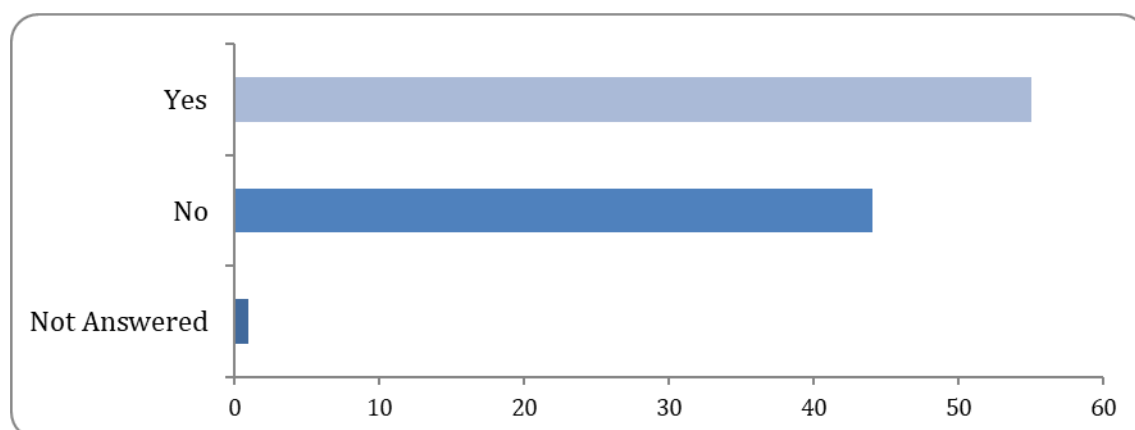
The code was heavily based on the English version of the Animal Welfare Code of Practice for Cats. The Department asked a number of questions around the code of practice to gain views from the public and interested parties on the suitability of the code.

## You Said

The Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture received **100** responses to the consultation. Of these, **98** responses were from individuals and **2** responses were representatives of society/ company/ charity.

**55%** of responses said that the code covered everything required. **20%** of the responses said there were things in the code that they disagreed with. **80%** said that the code had enough detail. **94%** said the code was understandable.

### Does the content of the code cover everything required?



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	55	55.00%
No	44	44.00%
Not Answered	1	1.00%

45% of responses said that the code did not cover everything required.

Three responses referred to there not being enough information around neutering or the advice not being strong enough. The Department has changed the wording to more strongly advise the neutering of cats.

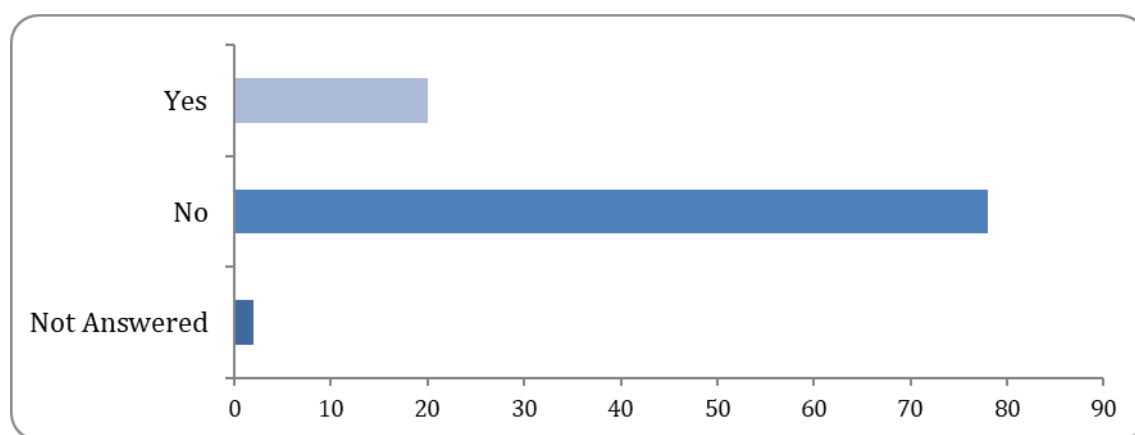
19 responses referred to making it compulsory to report an incident in which a person kills or injures a cat as part of a road traffic accident. This is beyond the scope of the code which is about keepers' responsibility to their cats. This would require an amendment to the Road Traffic Act 1985.

Five responses referred to making microchipping compulsory for cats. This is something the Department will consider and possibly consult on in the future but would not be covered by the animal welfare codes at present. The code does advise microchipping but it is not currently a legal requirement on the Isle of Man.

Two respondents mention tracking devices. The Department feels this is beyond the routine practice of most cat owners. Owners can choose to use these devices but the Department does not feel it should be a requirement or requires referencing in the code.

Two respondents mention the lack of information on breeding establishments. There is already legislation in place for licencing breeding establishments (Breeding of Dogs and Cats Act 1981). The Department is planning to consult and update the breeding legislation soon.

### Is there anything in the code that you don't agree with?

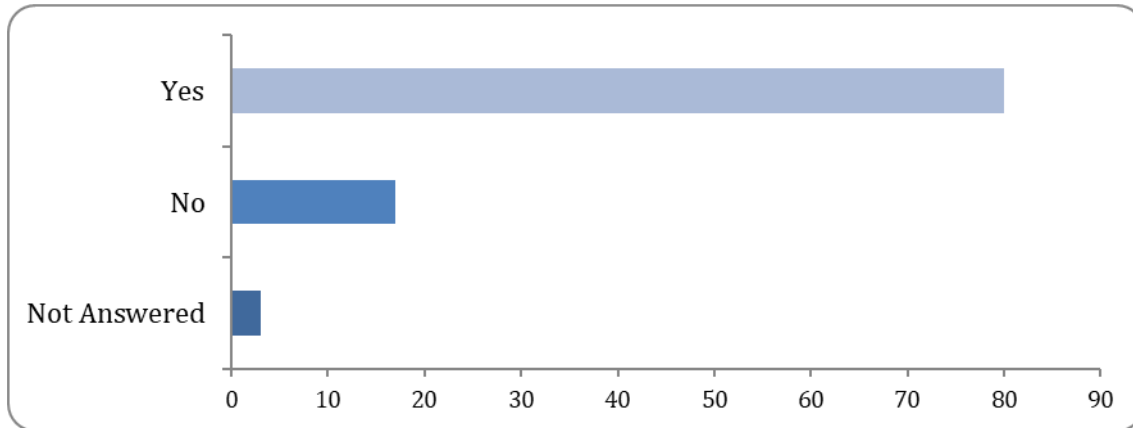


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	20	20.00%
No	78	78.00%
Not Answered	2	2.00%

Three respondents did not agree with the information given about weights/body condition of cats. One of these pointed out that the images illustrating various body condition scores of cats were not necessarily representative of specific breeds such as Bengals. A note will be added to the welfare code advising of this and for owners to speak to their veterinary surgeon if they are concerned about their cats' weight. The other two comments about weight relate to the fat pad. The code is intended to form a guide and the Department will ensure the wording suggests that advice should be taken from a veterinary surgeon if there is any concern over a cat's weight.

Two respondents were concerned about the information on shock collars. In view of the recent consultation on dog electronic collars carried out by DEFA (responses will be published soon), the information around shock collars has been removed from the code.

### Is there enough detail in the code?

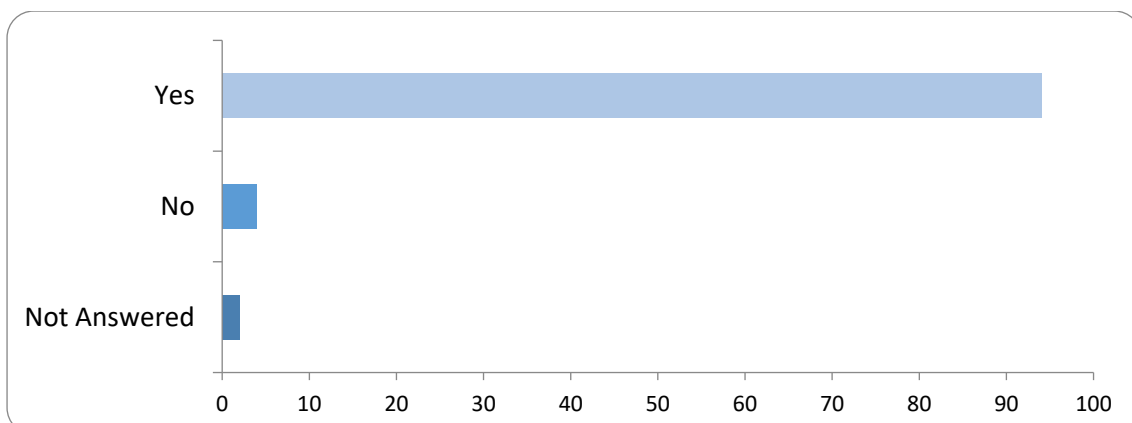


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	80	80.00%
No	17	17.00%
Not Answered	3	3.00%

There were varying comments relating to this question: either *“too much detail”*, *“it’s too ambiguous”* or *“the detail is excessive and may be either useful or overwhelming to a new owner of cats”*. Thus, on balance, the Department has decided to continue with the same amount of detail.

There was again mention of compulsory microchipping and legislation to ensure drivers report incidents in which a cat has been hit by a vehicle, but as outlined above, this is outside of the scope for the codes of practice.

### Is the code understandable?



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	94	94.00%
No	4	4.00%
Not Answered	2	2.00%

The majority of people agreed that it was understandable. There were five people who said it was not. Their comments vary from *“it’s too lengthy, it needs to be more understandable for the general public”* to *“written in such a simple way that it mollycoddles us”*.

All responses received during the consultation period have been carefully considered, and were valuable in both ensuring general satisfaction with the proposed code and in identifying some modifications that were needed or might improve the code in order that it can be finalised. They have also highlighted some areas of concern that although outside the remit of the Animal Codes of Practice, may lead to earlier consideration of new secondary legislation under the Animal Welfare Act in these areas.

## **We did**

The Department is grateful to those individuals and organisations who took time to respond to the consultation and tell us their views on the proposed Animal Welfare Code of Practice for Cats. As stated above some minor changes have been made to the code to address some of the concerns. Whilst some of the responses to the consultation are outside of the scope of the code, the Department will look at addressing some of the other concerns in future policy development, e.g. micro chipping of cats.