

NEWS



ICAM, Battersea, and Metropolis partner to support humane stray animal management

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Why dog & cat population management belongs in good metropolitan governance

With the inaugural Dog and Cat Population Management Solutions Labs taking place in summer 2025, we reflect on why

humane dog and cat population management belongs at the heart of good metropolitan governance.

Launched earlier this year by Metropolis, Battersea, and ICAM (International Companion Animal Management Company), the Solutions Lab is a pioneering partnership that enables city leaders to exchange knowledge and explore proven, real-world policies and models.

In the bustling landscape of modern cities, dogs and cats are more than just beloved companions—they are active participants in the metropolitan ecosystem. From pets in our homes to dog and cat populations roaming freely within our communities, their presence shapes our urban experience. However, the management of a city's population of dogs and cats often falls through the cracks of urban governance structures.

As our cities expand and human-animal interactions grow more complex, it's time to recognise that responsible dog and cat population management is not just an animal welfare issue, it's a matter of public health, environmental sustainability, and urban equity. The good news is that best practice, expertise and proven examples already exist, enabling both humans and animals to thrive.

Cities engage in humane and sustainable dog population management for a variety of reasons, including reducing dog bites, preventing road accidents, maintaining rabies vaccination coverage, and limiting harm to wildlife and livestock.

These efforts also improve the quality of urban spaces for everyone—from children to local businesses.

Cities also want to act in response to public complaints of nuisance behaviours and calls for greater care and compassion towards animals to protect their image. Access to veterinary services is lowest in poorer areas, leaving the most marginalised communities facing greater risks of zoonotic diseases like rabies as they struggle to get preventative care for their dogs. Whatever motivates a city, it's clear that caring for animals has great benefits for humans too.

And this isn't just theory - cities worldwide are putting it into action, with tangible benefits already being seen. Bogotá's mobile veterinary units are reaching all 20 localities with free sterilisation services, while Bosnia's innovative fostering programs keep dogs out of shelters entirely, and São Paulo's public veterinary hospitals ensure no human companion must choose between their dog or cat's health and putting food on the table.

Despite distance and diverse circumstances, what unites these cities - from Latin America to Europe - is a common understanding: dog and cat population management requires all stakeholders to work together effectively.

Effective humane and sustainable programmes depend on local government leadership working collaboratively with veterinary professionals, animal welfare organisations, community groups, pet owners, and community dog and cat caregivers. When mayors, city councils, and local authorities get behind such programmes by establishing appropriate regulations and coordinating the contributions of stakeholders, the results are visible for public health, community cohesion, urban development, and animal welfare.

When cities protect their animals, they protect their future—building safer, kinder, and more resilient communities for all.

Partnership

- *Battersea Dogs and Cats Home* in the UK is a member of the International Companion Animal Management (ICAM) coalition. It is committed to helping every dog and cat everywhere, by providing love and expert care to dogs and cats that come into its centres and by sharing its knowledge and resources with other organisations around the world.
- Since 2006 ICAM has promoted the development and use of humane and effective companion animal population management worldwide.
- *Metropolis* is a global network of the world's largest cities—providing innovative solutions to the critical challenges facing large metropolitan areas.

Did you know?

The *Positive Cities Pledge* supports and recognises cities, such as Cape Town and Bangkok who are creating safer, healthier, and more compassionate urban environments. Come join them and help your city take the pledge!