

## The Linacre Cats Protection Project 2014 final report

### Aims

- To implement a targeted proactive neuter program for cats in the community within the postcodes of Liverpool 20, 4, 5, 6 and Liverpool 21 an area of north Liverpool and south Sefton that is acknowledged in all government statistics to be the most deprived on Merseyside.
- To provide sufficient resources to allow reactive cat neutering where need has been proven and to allow public access to a means tested neuter program across the whole of Liverpool
- To forge meaningful links with other community groups working within the postcodes through which the scheme could be pushed
- To collect and assess data on both participating households and individual felines to allow patterns to be assessed as well as guiding future plans
- To draw up a list of factors from the data that would act as indices to allow the charity to assess impact of the scheme within these areas to guide future programs
- To target the surplus cat population living on the streets and from where too many households seem to acquire their cats

### Methods

- Funding to the tune of £36,000 was obtained that it was hoped would pay for over 1000 cats to be neutered within Merseyside, including sizable numbers within the target postcodes. The charity was able to neuter 1510 cats with this sum, of which 454 fell within the Linacre target postcodes. Since the Linacre Project began, 1878 cats have been neutered by our funders, the vast majority within the original single targeted deprived area of Liverpool 20 [792]. The 1510 cats neutered during 2014 include 1190 household domestic cats and 320 street or feral cats, representing 21% of the total. The 792 Liverpool 20 cats neutered equates to helping 5.7% of the 13,800 households inside the postcode in this outreach program. If we accept the view that one in four households have cats, then the Linacre Project has reached out to 23% of the cat owning households in Liverpool 20
- In addition the Linacre Project took the lead with Cats Protection backing in starting the Kirkby cat neuter project for Animals in Need for its first year of running in order to establish policies and procedures. The figures for the Kirkby postcodes of Liverpool 32 and Liverpool 33 are included here. Animals in Need will be running the project themselves in 2015

<b>Garston rescue</b>	<b>£5000</b>
<b>Freshfields rescue</b>	<b>£5000</b>
<b>Cats Protection</b>	<b>£21,100</b>
<b>External vouchers</b>	<b>£450</b>
<b>Persula Foundation</b>	<b>£5000</b>
<b>Anim in need</b>	<b>£1600</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£38150</b>

- Contact was established with a large number of existing community groups through the offices of Sefton Council for Voluntary Services already working with families, debt issues, advice provision, community support and social housing providers. All were provided with an outline of the project,

its funders and three channels to register cats for the project. Many chose to publish the project on their websites and we asked all community groups to ensure all their staff were aware of the opportunity

- All public service outlets were given publicity material on the project that the public could access, including libraries, social service offices, meeting rooms, churches and other animal welfare bodies like the PDSA, dog wardens and RSPCA inspectorate
- The charity ran a waiting list for the period once cats were registered, the public were encouraged to register by email, by text or by landline
- Several veterinary clinics handled all the neuters professionally with good feedback between the charity and the vets including, Kirkby clinic, Vets 4 Pets Old Swan, Whitecross and the newest clinic that has signed up to the project Vets 4 Pets Walton Vale.

<b>Kirkby clinic</b>	<b>593</b>
<b>Vets 4 pets OS</b>	<b>265</b>
<b>Whitecross</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Vets 4 Pets WV</b>	<b>571</b>

- Post surgery problems for all the clinics was minimal in what can be a challenging situation where cat recovery in often chaotic households could be expected to be difficult. Very little veterinary intervention was required after surgery. The project is indebted to the work, professionalism and flexibility of all the clinics in accommodating the Project.
- As with previous years no neutering vouchers were issued direct to households or clinics. Over 70% of the 1510 cats were collected from households, taken to clinic by the Project and returned with veterinary instructions by staff to ensure neutering was carried out. Previous attempts to issue vouchers and allow households to make the arrangements themselves have been met with failure rates of 25% and more, leaving unclaimed vouchers. Increasingly the charity has where appropriate endeavoured to meet household owners at the clinic on the morning of surgery to complete paperwork and hand over to the nurses but non attendance is significantly higher than morning pick-ups where owners fail to answer the door

## Findings

- The 2014 neuter figures included the following Linacre targeted postcode figures amounting to 30% of the Merseyside figures. Significantly the L20 figures are down for the fourth year, from 13%. When the Project was started it was 17% of the total annual neuter numbers conducted by the Project. Take up from the Linacre postcodes across the board was down, reflecting the increase in reactive neutering across the city in other postcodes. Increasingly many of the clinics across the city are signposting the public to the project when they deem a genuine need.
- The Project feels that there is a case to argue that this rise in reactive neutering outside the core target areas whilst still important, comes at the expense of proactive work within the primary postcodes and should be limited

<b>L11; 2012</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>L11; 2013</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>5.9%</b>
<b>L20; 2012</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>L20; 2013</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>10.4%</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>9.3%</b>
<b>L21; 2012</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>9.4%</b>	<b>L21; 2013</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>5.7%</b>
<b>L4; 2012</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>15.8%</b>	<b>L4; 2013</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>12.3%</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>8.8%</b>
<b>L5; 2012</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>L5; 2013</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>2.2%</b>
<b>L6; 2012</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>L6; 2013</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>2.7%</b>
<b>Kirkby 2012</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>Kirk; 2013</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>12.6%</b>

- The charity has drawn up a six points impact plan to measure and assess how effective this scheme on the ground will be. It argues that over a number of years assessment of its collated data will show reductions in age, male-female ratio, litters produced, percentage of pregnant cats etc. The charity has identified these key six areas of impact;

- **Age at neuter by gender**
- **Percentage of female pregnant or in season**
- **Percentage of females already had litters at point of neuter**
- **Average number of litters per females done by postcode**
- **Percentage owned cats neutered ; percentage street cats neutered by postcode**
- **Percentage cats neutered living in multicat households**

#### Age at neuter by gender

	2012		2013		2014	
Rehoming cats av	M = 0.8	F = 0.87	M = 0.8	F = 0.87	M = 0.8	F = 0.87
Merseyside average	M = 1.33	F = 1.33	M = 1.5	F = 1.6	M = 1.27	F = 1.3
Liverpool 20	M = 1.04	F = 1.36	M = 1.3	F = 1.04	M = 1.1	F = 1.35
Liverpool 21	M = 1.5	F = 1.55	M = 1.28	F = 1.2	M = 1.53	F = 1.05
Liverpool 11	M = 1.14	F = 1.1	M = 1.7	F = 2	M = 1	F = 1.2
Liverpool 4	M = 1.14	F = 1.42	M = 1.33	F = 1.25	M = 1.53	F = 1.1
Liverpool 5	-	-	M = 1.5	F = 2.13	M = 1.4	F = 1.9
Liverpool 6	M = 1.7	F = 1.6	M = 1.2	F = 1.2	M = 2.5	F = 1.3
Kirkby Project	M = 1.6	F = 2	M = 1.5	F = 1.9	M = 1.27	F = 1.3

- The project works towards an early age of neutering. For most females that are unneutered by the age of 1.3, a pregnancy is unavoidable. For the first year since Linacre started in 2009 female age at neuter in L20 dropped, unfortunately it still remains high; the charity aims to neuter before its first season.

#### Percentage of females pregnant or in season at neuter

	2012	2013	2014
Merseyside average	18.8%	19.4%	20.3%
Liverpool 20	18.2%	17%	2.2%
Liverpool 21	27.4%	28%	17.2%
Liverpool 11	4%	26%	18.5%
Liverpool 4	23.4%	24%	34%
Liverpool 5	-	15%	27%
Liverpool 6	12%	65%	13%
Kirkby Project	0	16%	26%

- A reduction in these high figures needs to be essential in reducing feline overpopulation. The figure for Liverpool 20 has dropped from 28.4% to 2.2% over several years, this figure needs to be maintained.
- The Project collects data on dysfunctional homes visited for access to neuter; the term indicates problems with alcohol, drugs and/or hygiene. Often these houses are multi-cat and quite chaotic houses generally with multi-agency needs. Many of them were direct referrals from other agencies. Accessing them and gaining co-operation was often challenging. The charity works on the principle of leaving the adult cats in what is often a poor environment but which will reduce the likelihood of

acquiring further animals and then breeding again. Post neuter visits have affirmed this to be the case in most circumstances. Liverpool 20 figures have dropped from a high of 11.1% during the last three years to a single household with five cats in 2014. It is hoped that there will be no return to high numbers of such households

**Percentage of females already had litter at point of neuter  
Average number of litters per females done**

	2012		2013		2014	
<b>Merseyside average</b>	<b>35.4%</b>	<b>0.65</b>	<b>38.2%</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>0.6</b>
<b>Liverpool 20</b>	<b>30.6%</b>	<b>1.29</b>	<b>22.6%</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>0.45</b>
<b>Liverpool 21</b>	<b>54.9%</b>	<b>0.84</b>	<b>23.3%</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>0.39</b>
<b>Liverpool 11</b>	<b>28.5%</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>30.4%</b>	<b>0.47</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>0.42</b>
<b>Liverpool 4</b>	<b>54.7%</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>30.9%</b>	<b>0.53</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>0.47-</b>
<b>Liverpool 5</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>0.89</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>0.36</b>
<b>Liverpool 6</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>19.5%</b>	<b>0.28</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>1.0</b>
<b>Kirkby Project</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>26.7%</b>	<b>0.69</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>0.6</b>

- Ideally both of these figures should register low numbers and percentages. Liverpool 20 stood at 40.7% of females having already been bred prior to neuter in 2011 and the average number of litters per female has dropped from its high of 1.9 to 0.45. In other words cat breeding in Liverpool 20 was so high that when calculated it meant that on average each female the Project was dealing with had already had nearly two litters. Both results confirm reduced breeding rates in these wards and together with some of the other data here suggestive of project impact

**Percentage owned cats neutered; percentage street cats neutered**

	Owned 2012 Street		Owned 2013 Street		Owned 2014 Street	
<b>Merseyside av</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>Liverpool 20</b>	<b>85.6%</b>	<b>14.4%</b>	<b>84.4%</b>	<b>15.6%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>Liverpool 21</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>80.6%</b>	<b>19.4%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Liverpool 11</b>	<b>82.5%</b>	<b>17.5%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>Liverpool 4</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>85.3%</b>	<b>14.7%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>Liverpool 5</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>47%</b>
<b>Liverpool 6</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Kirkby Project</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>21%</b>

- Initial data collection in previous years proved that in Liverpool 20 over 32% of households got their cat from the street. The Project was surprised by this finding but targeted street cats and feral cats for that reason. It is widely accepted by welfare professionals that Liverpool has a huge feral cat problem that is tackled with too few resources. A consequence of this is the larger unneutered household cat numbers derived from the street. Tackling overbreeding in a given area has firstly to tackle the number on the streets. The Project was surprised to see the street or feral cat percentage rise again in Liverpool 20. This can be partly explained in a steep rise in the level of feral cat trapping on industrial estates in the postcode as well as a large rise in house demolition and rebuilding work going on resulting in entire estates being rebuilt, reoccupied and consequently moved into by outlying feral cats seeking new territory

**G Percentage of cats from households owning over three cats**

	2012	2013	2014
<b>Merseyside average</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>53%</b>
<b>Liverpool 20</b>	<b>48.4%</b>	<b>44.3%</b>	<b>49%</b>
<b>Liverpool 21</b>	<b>37.7%</b>	<b>49.2%</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>Liverpool 11</b>	<b>43.2%</b>	<b>54.7%</b>	<b>68%</b>
<b>Liverpool 4</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>53.1%</b>	<b>42%</b>
<b>Liverpool 5</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>61%</b>
<b>Liverpool 6</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>73%</b>
<b>Kirkby Project</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>53%</b>

- The data clearly indicates the prevalence of breeding and being unable to follow through with a plan to ensure any offspring can be accommodated elsewhere. Instead the offspring end up remaining in the same household and the household then realises they require intervention to ensure the same situation does not occur
- It cannot be stressed how surprising the charity found the almost complete lack of existing contact, households in the target areas had with other animal health professionals. Only nineteen households had cat flaps installed. Only 5% of the total had already vaccinated their cats. Only 6% had registered their cat to a private practice. Another 3% of cats were registered to the pdsa clinics in the city. Seventeen owners had previously chipped their cats. Any regard to these figures must conclude that well over 90% of the households worked with had no prior access to advice, guidance and experience from welfare professionals. In many of these postcodes access to private practice clinics was limited. There has never been a vet practice in Liverpool 20. Until 2013 there was no practice in the Kirkby Project area Liverpool 32 and 33, now there are two clinics. There are no vet practices in Liverpool 11, Liverpool 6 or Liverpool 5. It could be argued that part of the solution long term does require veterinary investment within these areas. As it is, it unfortunately is left to charity investment with low resources to provide a lead

**Where household cats are obtained from?**

Area	2012	Bred	Family/friend	Street	Pet shop	internet
<b>Merseyside average</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>29.5%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>5%</b>	
<b>Liverpool 20</b>	<b>15.6%</b>	<b>40.2%</b>	<b>23.8%</b>	<b>10.4%</b>		
<b>Liverpool 21</b>	<b>22.7%</b>	<b>35.2%</b>	<b>22.7%</b>	<b>4%</b>		
<b>Liverpool 11</b>	<b>16.4%</b>	<b>31.7%</b>	<b>22.3%</b>	<b>14.1%</b>		
<b>Liverpool 4</b>	<b>18.3%</b>	<b>21.9%</b>	<b>31.7%</b>	<b>15.2%</b>		
<b>Liverpool 5</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>		
<b>Liverpool 6</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>23.5%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>10-%</b>		
<b>Kirkby Project</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>-</b>		
<b>Merseyside 2013</b>	<b>21.5%</b>	<b>19.1%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>6.4%</b>	<b>9.7%</b>	
<b>Liverpool 20</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>32.1%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>8.6%</b>		
<b>Liverpool 21</b>	<b>11.9%</b>	<b>31.2%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>		
<b>Liverpool 11</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>7%</b>		
<b>Liverpool 4</b>	<b>14.7%</b>	<b>23.3%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>15.4%</b>		
<b>Liverpool 5</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>-</b>		
<b>Liverpool 6</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>17%</b>		
<b>Kirkby Project</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>-</b>		
<b>Merseyside 2014</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>9%</b>	
<b>Liverpool 20</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>13%</b>	

<b>Liverpool 21</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Liverpool 11</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>Liverpool 4</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Liverpool 5</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Liverpool 6</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Kirkby Project</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>

- If the project does not know where cats are acquired from it cannot tackle root causes. Access to the Project allows guidance to a social grouping where it is self evident there has been no access to welfare professionals previously. Breeding within the household can be tackled by the Project's doorstep approach. Its street work can and will reduce the availability of young cats to households that never really wanted a cat in the first place. Please note here that the notion of street obtained cats in this table refers to ferals, strays and abandoned cats that have not been taken in for rehoming by welfare organisations. It should be stressed that a large number of these street derived cats simply arrived on a doorstep, feeding by the household commenced and the cat moved in. Family and friend derived cats will always be a factor but it is important to stress that this is the predominant medium along with the word and praise of neighbours by which the Project has spread its message and enabled its work to progress on difficult estates. Working with the community has been integral to its success. The rise of the Internet sold kittens is noted here.

## Conclusions

- The charity commenced an intensive blanket neuter program within the postcode of Liverpool 20, with the assistance of external funders and working on the ground with voluntary and professional community agencies in 2009. It has taken its method of working and now applied it to other deprived north Liverpool areas
- Its modus operandi has proved to be essential. All the data indicates a clear lack of advice, guidance, contact of any kind with vet health professionals. Only the PDSA operate on the ground, there are few private vet clinics in all targeted postcodes. There is clear evidence that whole communities are by passed unwittingly until a project like this is taken into the community as a whole. Not surprisingly the community then responds positively
- It is indeed unfortunate that where social deprivation is so endemic, cat neutering is at the bottom of the heap. There is no way round this other than to make provision for it. The charity has always believed that animal ownership should be universal, but there needs to be provision and support
- It is clear that because there has been too little intervention by the third sector [this charity has been working on the ground within L20 well before 2009 but with too little resourcing] there are too many felines within the postcodes. The excessive breeding supplies households within the community, the street's excess further adds to household pet ownership, in all of this there is never the opportunity to encounter a structured pet adopting entity like the RSPCA or Cats Protection shelter outside the postcode and then be guided, to have input into the needs of cat ownership. The community as a whole knows little else but to continue the cycle of breeding. Supply within the community has outstripped demand. Intervention like this is crucial to breaking that cycle for the future
- The data collated from L20 over the years on nearly 900 cats and households in such a small geographical area is starting to suggest the beginnings of impact. By looking at key figures and trends from the above tables this charity can start to show measurable change. That these trends need to be replicated over the next couple of years is self- evident and without that proof it would be difficult to be absolutely clear about impact within the postcode of Liverpool 20
- That the project must continue on the ground over a number of years is clear. The Project envisages at least another five years of working in this way with these communities. It is important

that the data is analysed comprehensively annually to guide priorities. It is crucial that the charity continues to collate data that can be analysed annually to guide its approach

- It is proposed that the Project focuses more on the designated postcodes at the expense of the whole of Liverpool. The Project was set up as a proactive body not a reactive body and there are already other outlets available for Merseyside as a whole from which vouchers can be obtained including Cats Protection, RSPCA and PDSA, The Linacre Project can signpost households to them
- The Linacre Project used its model to help set up the Kirkby Cat Neuter Project which has run in 2014 in co-operation with Carla Lane Animals in Need and Cats Protection. Figures from the scheme have been included here in this report and having guided the pilot, the project has been embraced by Animals in Need who will be running it themselves in 2015
- Following discussions it has been decided that the Kirkby scheme will focus on the following areas Liverpool 32, 33, 11 and 10
- The Linacre scheme will focus on Liverpool 20, 21, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9, thus dividing up north Liverpool between the schemes
- The Linacre Project will still undertake work with street/community cats across Liverpool
- The Linacre Project has undertaken to look at the feasibility of starting a Speke Cat Neuter Project in south Liverpool for 2016 and to address the logistics of starting such a scheme

## Acknowledgements

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