



Buying Well

The Puppy Contract and Kitten Checklist, explained — and the bad-seller red flags

PETSLIKEMINE
NEW PUPPY & KITTEN

THINKING OF A

SELLER / SOURCE

VIEWING DATE

On collection day, the paperwork tells you almost as much as the animal does, yet most new owners have never been shown what “good” looks like. This one-pager fixes that. A seller who has the right papers, in order, is almost always doing the rest of it right too. Use the free, trusted tools below as your list of questions, and walk in knowing exactly what to look for.

USE THE REAL TOOLS (FREE, AND THEY MAKE A GOOD SELLER EASY TO SPOT)

Buying a puppy? Download the **Puppy Contract** (Animal Welfare Foundation and RSPCA). To fill it in honestly a breeder has to have actually health-tested the parents, kept records and reared the litter thoughtfully — so it makes a good breeder easy to recognise and a poor one hard to hide.

Buying a kitten? Use **The Kitten Checklist** (the Cat Group and International Cat Care). It covers the same ground for cats, including FeLV/FIV testing and any breed health testing.

Download whichever applies, read it through, and take it with you to work through with the seller rather than reading it for the first time on the doorstep.

GREEN FLAGS: WHAT GOOD DOCUMENTATION LOOKS LIKE

- ☐ Happy to complete the Puppy Contract / Kitten Checklist without fuss
- ☐ A vaccination record, ideally vet-stamped, with real dates
- ☐ Evidence the parents were health-tested (ask, for pedigrees especially)
- ☐ The seller wants to know about you, and is happy to hear from you afterwards
- ☐ You see the pet with its mum, in the home where it was reared
- ☐ A worming and flea record with several dated entries, not one vague note
- ☐ The microchip number and transfer-of-keepership paperwork ready for you

RED FLAGS: REASONS TO PAUSE, OR WALK AWAY

Meeting in a car park, at a motorway services or on the doorstep rather than in the home. No sign of the mum, or a “mum” who seems unrelated. Pressure to pay a deposit fast, or cash only. Multiple breeds or litters constantly available. Vaccination records with no vet’s details. A seller who has never heard of, or reacts badly to, a free welfare-backed document about the animal’s health. Under Lucy’s Law, buying a puppy or kitten under six months in England means seeing it with its mother, in the place it was born; a third-party seller is a warning sign.

MICROCHIPPING: THIS ONE IS THE LAW

Dog microchipping has been compulsory in the UK since 2016, and cat microchipping in England since 10 June 2024. The chip only works if the database record is right, so on the day get the number, confirm which database it is on, and **transfer the keepership into your name**. Then keep your details current for the animal’s whole life.

Introductory insurance from a breeder or rescue is a useful bridge, but it is short. The arrival of a new pet is exactly the moment to choose your own cover, because it is most valuable in place before any problem appears.

Written and reviewed by Dr Alastair Greenway MRCVS and Claire Greenway BVM&S MRCVS. This sheet explains and records. It does not diagnose or prescribe. Always follow your own vet’s instructions.

How to use. Before the day, download the Puppy Contract or Kitten Checklist and read it through. On the day, work through it with the seller, check the records add up, and transfer the microchip into your name. If several things are missing or vague, it is fine to walk away. A wellbeing aid, not a substitute for veterinary advice.

GET THE PUPPY CONTRACT / KITTEN CHECKLIST — AND TAKE IT WITH YOU