USPCA

PROTECTING ALL ANIMALS ESTD 1836

Rescue | Protect | Advocate | Together





2025/26 At a Glance

Annual Impact Report



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Foreword from our Chairperson

It is a great honour, as Chairperson, to present the USPCA Trustees' Annual Report for 2025/26.

Having joined the Board as a Trustee in September 2025 and subsequently assuming the role of Chair in June 2026, I have had the privilege of witnessing first-hand, the passion, professionalism and commitment that define the USPCA. I have seen a charity that is deeply committed to its mission, supported by dedicated staff, volunteers, members, donors and Trustees who share a common purpose: improving the lives of animals across Northern Ireland.

This year has been marked by significant achievements and transformational change across our organisation. In addition to delivering our core animal welfare services, we expanded our 'Snip and Chip' campaign, increasing access to affordable neutering and microchipping. We continued to distribute essential pet food parcels through food banks across Northern Ireland, helping to keep pets and owners together during the ongoing cost-of-living crisis. Our partnerships supporting those affected by domestic abuse also continued to make a tangible difference, providing safe pathways for both people and their animals to escape harm. Beyond frontline services, we have continued to champion animal welfare through effective advocacy, building momentum and support for a ban on hunting with dogs in Northern Ireland. Together, these achievements reflect our commitment not only to protecting animals today, but also to creating lasting change for the future.

The organisation has undertaken substantial work to strengthen its governance, leadership and foundations. Working closely with Chief Executive Officer Heather Weir and the Leadership Team, the Board has supported a programme of organisational transformation designed to ensure the charity remains sustainable, resilient and well-positioned to meet future challenges and opportunities.

A major achievement during the year has been the development of the USPCA's new 2026-2029 Strategic Plan. Shaped through engagement with Trustees, staff, volunteers and stakeholders, the strategy provides a clear roadmap for the future and sets out an ambitious vision for how we will strengthen animal welfare services, invest in our people and increase our impact in the years ahead.

This year also marked an important period of transition for the Board of Trustees. In June 2026, the USPCA bid farewell to Dr John Farrell, who stepped down as Chair after many years of dedicated service. We also thank Elaine McCrory, Honorary Secretary and Paul Kearney (Treasurer) who came to the end of their tenure after completing 8 years of service at the charity. We'd like to thank Trustees Brendan Mullan and Eamon Mullan for their valuable contributions and dedication to the charity. We wish them the best. During the year we proudly welcomed three new Trustees to our team, Lyle Watters, Andrew Talbot and myself. In April 2026, Paul Crawford added veterinary expertise to the Board and Bernard Grimley, who joined us as the new Honorary Treasurer. I am delighted that our Trustees and new executive leadership team bring a lifetime of expertise, a passion for animal welfare and a desire to make a difference to help the charity.

I would also like to recognise and thank all Trustees, past and present, for the time, experience and insight they willingly contribute.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to our members, donors, supporters, volunteers and staff. Your loyalty, trust and generosity are fundamental to the success of the USPCA.

As we look ahead, I am encouraged by the strength of the organisation, inspired by the dedication of its people and confident in the vision that guides us forward.

S. A. Gray

Baroness Sue Gray
Chair of Trustees



Foreword from our CEO

As I reflect on my first full year as Chief Executive Officer of the USPCA, I do so with immense pride, gratitude and optimism for the future.

This Trustees' Annual Report tells a remarkable story of resilience, compassion and hope. Within these pages you will read about animals rescued from neglect and abandonment, wildlife rehabilitated and returned to their natural habitats, vulnerable pets receiving life-changing veterinary treatment, and countless animals finding the loving homes they deserve.

Throughout 2025/26, our teams continued to deliver exceptional frontline services for animals and communities across Northern Ireland.

I would like to pay particular tribute to our frontline staff. Our veterinary professionals, animal care teams, wildlife officers, inspectors, reception staff and operational colleagues carry out demanding and often emotionally challenging work. Their dedication is the foundation of the USPCA's impact.

I also wish to thank our volunteers, whose commitment enhances every aspect of our work.

Alongside delivering services, 2025/26 has been a year of transformation for the organisation. Working closely with the Board of Trustees, I have led a programme of change focused on strengthening governance, leadership structures, workforce planning, financial sustainability, and organisational effectiveness.

A key milestone has been the development of our new 2026-2029 Strategic Plan, providing a clear direction for the organisation and guiding our efforts to strengthen services and increase our impact.

I am particularly proud of the progress achieved in prevention, education and advocacy, including community neutering initiatives and our partnership educational programmes reaching more than 1.5 million children across the UK.

To our members, donors, adopters, fosterers, corporate partners and supporters, thank you for your continued trust and generosity.

As we look ahead, we begin our next strategic cycle with a strengthened organisation, a clear vision and an outstanding team of people united by a common purpose.

Heather Weir

Heather Weir
Chief Executive Officer



What We Do

As it marks its 190th anniversary in 2026, the USPCA continues a legacy of nearly two centuries of championing animal welfare, preventing cruelty and protecting animals across Northern Ireland.

Our core services include:

Veterinary Care & Rehabilitation

Rescuing, rehabilitating, releasing, and rehoming vulnerable animals across Northern Ireland.

Community Outreach

Providing vital pet food bank services to support struggling pet owners and making essential veterinary services accessible for those on low incomes.





Special Investigations

Disrupting cruelty, dismantling the networks that allow it to continue and destroying the conditions that let it take root in the first place.

Education

Fostering respect, compassion, and welfare education across all generations.

Advocacy & Policy Reform

Campaigning for legislative and policy changes that advance animal welfare standards.



25/26 YEAR IN REVIEW

VETERINARY SERVICES — **6,872** CONSULTATIONS & **1,171** SURGERIES

491 ANIMALS REHOMED OR REUNITED

1,983 ANIMALS GROOMED

2,354 WILDLIFE RESCUES

A 42% INCREASE ON LAST YEAR

17,423 HOURS VOLUNTEERED

6,773 FOOD PARCELS ISSUED

68,023 PHONE CALLS

ANIMALS FOSTERED 970

902 ANIMALS NEUTERED

INCLUDING **709** CAT NEUTERS THROUGH OUR SCHEME

740 VET VOUCHERS ISSUED TO HELP WILDLIFE

549 ORGANISED CRIME REPORTS PASSED TO ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Data Source: USPCA Trustees Report

Rescue & Rehoming

During the 2025–26 reporting year, the USPCA delivered vital direct care, shelter, and rehoming services to domestic pets across Northern Ireland.

Dogs & Puppies

Every dog and puppy that enters the care of the USPCA is a life worth protecting.










Key Figures

223 **Stray Dogs Safeguarded:** Providing shelter, food, and care to lost dogs.

59 **Loving Homes Found:** 37 adults and 22 puppies began bright new chapters with compassionate adoptive families.

89 **Reunited Families:** Restoring peace of mind by returning 89 lost pets safely to their owners.



Ellie

Ellie was a stray lab cross who came into the USPCA on the 9th October 2025. It was obvious that something was wrong with her right front leg. She didn't have any range of movement in it; the leg looked like an old injury that hadn't healed properly. After an owner appeal produced no response, it was decided that her front leg would need to be amputated.

Ellie adapted to having three legs amazingly well and was soon playing and stealing the staff's hearts. After 74 days in our care, she found her new home just before Christmas and she has settled in well with her two new dog siblings. Ellie was also the star of our 2025 Christmas campaign!

Summer & 7 Pups

Summer was brought into the centre by a member of the public as she was found straying around the Carnbane Industrial Estate. During her vet check it was discovered that she was producing milk, one of a few clear signs that she had recently given birth.

Staff and volunteers went out searching for puppies in the same area and to begin with there was no luck. Staff didn't give up however and kept checking the area, even taking Summer along with them to see if she would lead the team to the pups. After two and a half days of searching, Veterinary Nurse Assistant, Natasha heard puppies crying and found seven 2–3-week-old puppies in the woodland! Although a little underweight without mum's milk, they were thankfully healthy. The puppies were reunited with mum, and she did a great job of looking after them until they were ready to be weaned off her.

All puppies were rehomed and Summer, now called Jess, found her home with our Director of Animal Welfare Operations & Development, Siobhan McHaffie.



Cats & Kittens

Cats and kittens represent the vast majority of animals coming through our doors, accounting for over 80% of all admissions this year. The overwhelming influx of stray cats, pregnant females, and abandoned litters continues to place immense pressure on our shelter capacity and foster networks.



Key Figures

410 **410 Cats & Kittens Welcomed into Care:** 123 adult cats and 287 fragile kittens found shelter, nourishment, and medical treatment with our team.

301 **301 Loving Homes Found:** 89 adult cats and 212 kittens began bright new lives with caring adoptive families.

While 301 cats and kittens found forever homes, others remain in our care receiving dedicated foster support and medical treatment as they prepare for adoption. Tragically, due to the extreme sickness, vulnerability, and complex medical needs of some rescues (particularly fragile kittens) not all could be saved. In these heartbreaking cases, our team provided compassionate end-of-life care and humane relief from suffering.







Moya

Found extremely cold and weak, Moya was admitted into our care in July 2025 alongside her two siblings. While her siblings improved, our veterinary team knew Moya was in a very bad way.

It was suspected that Moya had suffered from severe head trauma. Unable to hold herself up, Moya had head tremors and her left eye was very swollen. The team were unsure if she would make it through the night, but she deserved a chance.

Moya received intensive vet care and was fostered as she needed around the clock monitoring. She had limited vision and needed to be syringe fed every few hours.

Her recovery was a slow process. The team began to suspect that Moya may have dwarfism and potentially other underlying neurological abnormalities. Progress came but in tiny steps. Every day was uncertain, but this little lady never gave up.

Thanks to the patience, love and nurture of the veterinary and animal care teams, Moya proved that she was going to live a full cat life! After 150 days in our care, Moya found the loving forever home she deserved.

Continual Investment in Infrastructure

Our animals receive the best possible care in safe, hygienic environments and upgrading the pen flooring across our animal facilities represented a major enhancement in biosecurity. Replacing the original tiled surfaces with modern, seamless flooring allows for faster, more effective cleaning and disinfection, ensuring pristine hygienic standards between animal stays.

Companion Animal Fostering

The 2025/26 year marked the first full term of our dedicated Fostering Coordinator role, establishing a structured foundation for our community-based care network. Onboarding our initial cohort of foster carers delivered immediate benefits by providing loving home environments for vulnerable animals and relieving shelter staff of the physical and emotional responsibility of fostering alongside their daily duties.

As a vital part of our volunteer network, our foster carers provided their time, essential home-based care and specialised rehabilitation for 237 animals during its first full year under dedicated coordination.



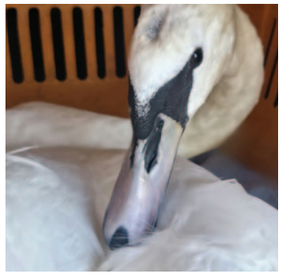


Barney, Lily, Marshall, Robin

Four puppies were found abandoned in March 2026. They were seen quickly by the vets and given a check over. Thankfully no issues were present. They spent a few days in our care whilst we found a foster home for them. Our fosterer Danielle was able to take them on for a couple of weeks until they were old enough for their first vaccine. They thrived in her care, loving socialisation with people and one of her own dogs. The puppies came back to the centre, having grown quite a bit with wonderful little personalities. They all found new homes within the week!

Wildlife

During the reporting year, our wildlife rescue and rehabilitation team managed 2,080 admissions representing a diverse cross-section of wild animals. Our wildlife rescue staff and volunteer network respond to emergency calls across Northern Ireland to rescue, rehabilitate, and protect native species and delicate ecosystems.










Alongside managing record demand, the department underwent significant structural growth, facility upgrades, and strategic cross-border collaboration to enhance patient care and long-term release success:

Key Figures

2,354 **Total Wildlife Rescues Conducted:** A 42.3% surge in demand compared to 2024–25, representing 700 additional emergency callouts.

85 **Diverse Species Supported:** Our specialist care encompassed 68 wild bird species, 16 mammal species, and 1 aquatic species.

740 **740 Wildlife Vet Vouchers Issued:** Reception teams issued 32% more emergency veterinary vouchers year-on-year, extending our lifeline across Northern Ireland and empowering more local communities to get urgent care to injured wildlife.



Wild Species Breakdown (2025–26)

Species	Count	% of Total
Bird (General)	1,646	79.13%
Hedgehog	154	7.40%
Bird of Prey	64	3.08%
Swan	59	2.84%
Badger	28	1.35%
Bat	28	1.35%
Rabbit	28	1.35%
Fox	25	1.20%
Rodent (Wildlife)	21	1.01%
Hare	15	0.72%
Grey Squirrel	4	0.19%
Pine Marten	2	0.10%
Red Squirrel	2	0.10%
Goldfish	2	0.10%
Otter	1	0.05%
Stoat	1	0.05%
Total Admissions	**2,080**	**100.0%**

Wild birds and waterfowl accounted for over 85% of all admissions, alongside significant interventions for iconic local mammals, including 154 hedgehogs, 28 badgers, and 28 bats. The team also delivered critical care to protected species such as red squirrels, pine martens, otters, and stoats, reinforcing our commitment to preserve Northern Ireland's biodiversity.

Demand, Insights & Trends

16,500+ Wildlife Inquiries Handled

Our reception team processed over 16,500 wildlife-related calls, providing triage advice, dispatching rescue officers, and coordinating local veterinary support.

Spring & Summer Surge

85% of all wildlife rescues occurred during the first six months of the reporting year (April–September). This intense period accounted for 86% of all bird rescues and 76% of all hedgehog admissions, driven by fledgling season and active foraging months.

Summer Bat Interventions

Of the 28 bats rescued throughout the year, 79% (22 bats) required assistance in July and August alone, coinciding with the peak maternity and roosting. season

Spike in Sparrowhawks

August saw an unprecedented influx of 18 birds of prey, more than double the monthly average. Notably, 11 of these were Sparrowhawks, representing 55% of the annual total for this species in a single month. This trend provides a valuable focus for ongoing research to assess whether fledgling independence or environmental factors played a role.

Autumn Swan Season (September–November)

Waterfowl rescues peaked during late autumn, with 52% of all swan rescues occurring between September and November. Disorientation during seasonal shifts and overhead power line collisions during poor weather contributed to this influx.

Nurturing Leverets



In early February, two vulnerable leverets came into our care after being found by a concerned member of the public. Suspected to have been picked up and brought into a garden by a family pet, the finder contacted the USPCA, ensuring the young hares received the immediate, specialised care they needed.

Over the course of seven weeks, the two leverets underwent intensive rehabilitation at our Newry centre under the dedicated care of Wildlife Officers. Their treatment began with round-the-clock bottle and syringe hand-feedings.

As they gained weight and strength, the team gradually transitioned them to solid food, introducing wild forage, including dandelions, nettles, and native greenery, to mirror their natural diet and prepare them for life in the wild.

In March, following weeks of specialised nursing and development, the milestone moment arrived and both leverets were successfully released back into their natural habitat.

Special Investigations

Combating animal fighting and disrupting the illegal puppy trade remained the primary strategic priorities for our Special Investigations Unit (SIU) throughout 2025/26. Through rigorous intelligence gathering, frontline surveillance, and multi-agency collaboration, the SIU exceeded every target set for the reporting year.

Strategic Objectives & KPI Outcomes (2025/26)

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI)	2025/26 TARGET	2025/26 OUTCOME	PERFORMANCE VS. TARGET
Organised Crime Reports Received	618	1,216	+96.8% (Nearly Doubled)
Intelligence Reports Shared with Enforcement Agencies	180	548	+204.4% (Tripled)
Major Investigations Completed & Referred	2	3*	+50%
Surveillance Evidence Obtained (Footage / Images)	18	29	+61.1%

The SIU's operational performance reflected a dramatic surge in detection and impact, driven by receiving 1,216 organised crime reports (nearly double our annual target) which highlights growing public trust and awareness surrounding illicit animal trade networks. By referring 548 verified intelligence packages directly to police and statutory authorities, the unit comfortably exceeded its benchmark by over 200%, providing support to statutory enforcement agencies across Northern Ireland, while covert field operatives secured 29 critical surveillance files to help directly disrupt illegal syndicates.

Tackling cross-border Cockfighting Networks

The SIU achieved landmark progress in disrupting illegal Cockfighting rings across the border during the 2025/26 operating period. Cockfighting, a barbaric activity where gamecocks are pitted against each other in enclosed arenas for gambling and entertainment, frequently results in prolonged suffering and death.

Following proactive surveillance in 2024, the SIU identified an active cockfighting operation near Emyvale, County Monaghan, and alerted An Garda Síochána. Gardaí raided the venue, intercepting over 50 attendees (many originating from Northern Ireland), seizing 70 live birds, and recovering 15 dead cockerels. This action directly led to the arrest and prosecution of a County Monaghan male charged with seven animal cruelty offenses under the Animal Health and Welfare Act 2014.

Expanding our intelligence matrix, the SIU has now identified more Northern Ireland-based suspects, ensuring continued pressure on those involved in organised animal crime.



Exposing International Dog Fighting Networks

Culminating in the 2025/26 reporting year, a landmark 19-month operation by our SIU successfully infiltrated and exposed a sophisticated international dog fighting network.

Through close inter-agency collaboration and shared intelligence, investigators gained access to a private social media forum comprising 27 suspected dog fighters. Analysis of the platform uncovered 29 detailed match reports and graphic fight accounts resulting in the brutal deaths of at least three dogs.

Combining intelligence with League Against Cruel Sports to develop robust lines of inquiry, the SIU assisted the BBC *Spotlight* team in producing a major investigative documentary. Broadcast during the year, the program exposed a clandestine dog fighting ring stretching from County Antrim to Amsterdam, bringing national public attention to this illegal practice.

Strategic Partnerships



Combatting organised animal cruelty and wildlife crime requires strong inter-agency collaboration, targeted intelligence sharing, and proactive community engagement. Our Special Investigations Unit (SIU) continues to lead and contribute to key enforcement and advocacy alliances across Northern Ireland and more widely across the UK.

League Against Cruel Sports (LACS)

We maintained our close working partnership with LACS, focusing joint efforts on investigating illegal dog fighting rings and campaigning to ban hunting with dogs across Northern Ireland.





Pet Trade Task Force

As active members of this multi-agency task force, we participate in a dedicated intelligence subgroup to exchange best practices, track illegal breeding networks, and disrupt illicit pet trading.

SPCA Intelligence Network

We joined a newly established intelligence forum comprising SPCA organisations across the UK and Ireland. Though in its early stages, this peer-to-peer network is proving invaluable for cross-border information sharing and operational strategy.

Belfast Hills Partnership & Community Engagement

To combat localised wildlife crime, the SIU delivered specialised educational presentations to the Belfast Hills Trust, Ligoniel Community Group, the National Trust, and the PSNI. These sessions focused on *Operation BROCKWATCH*, highlighting badger baiting, hare coursing, and identifying at-risk hotspots. Crucially, these outreach efforts established a trusted reporting channel, encouraging residents to submit wildlife crime reports they were uncomfortable making directly to law enforcement.

NWCU Badger Tactical Delivery Group

As active members of the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU) delivery group, the SIU submitted 39 incident records for the 2025 calendar year report. This represents an encouraging decrease from 52 reports in 2024, largely driven by a reduction in priority offenders sharing illicit badger crime content online.

Partnership for Wildlife Action (PAW NI)

We continue to advocate for stronger engagement within this joint DAERA and PSNI-led group, working to ensure wildlife crime enforcement remains a multi-agency priority despite broader organisational challenges.

Advocating for Inter-Agency Enforcement

Our team remains proactively focused on building stronger working relationships with key statutory enforcement agencies. We continue to advocate for full inclusion in collaborative initiatives like the *Paws for Thought* group to maximise regulatory oversight at ports and entry points.

Operation BROCKWATCH

Operation BROCKWATCH is a specialised wildlife protection initiative and a joint initiative between the USPCA, NI Badger Group, and local landowners, protecting vulnerable badger clans across NI from criminal gangs. The initiative deploys trained local volunteers and covert surveillance technology to monitor, inspect, and safeguard vulnerable badger setts against illegal baiting and persecution across all counties in Northern Ireland. Working alongside the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU), the operation gathers critical intelligence, deters priority offenders, and raises public awareness to combat badger-related crime.





BROCKWATCH Highlights



Volunteer Growth & Nationwide Sett Protection

Supported by a network of 21 active, dedicated volunteers under new standardised management policies, Operation BROCKWATCH expanded its protection to 35 setts across every county in Northern Ireland backed by enhanced monitoring technology and nationwide coverage on BBC's *Farm 999*.





National Recognition for Anti-Badger Crime Work

The Special Investigations Unit (SIU) was awarded two prestigious challenge coins by the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU) and the Badger Tactical Delivery Group, recognising the team's and volunteers' significant contributions to investigating, preventing, and raising public awareness around badger crime.



Social Enterprise

Our Social Enterprise division, encompassing Charity Stores, the Grooming Room, and Pet Supplies, experienced a landmark year of operational transformation, financial growth, and national recognition. Crucially, the unrestricted income generated by these commercial operations serves as the financial backbone of our charity. The flexible funding gives the USPCA the operational independence to cover facility running costs, emergency wildlife response, food bank support, and specialised medical care to animals in need across Northern Ireland.












Charity Shops

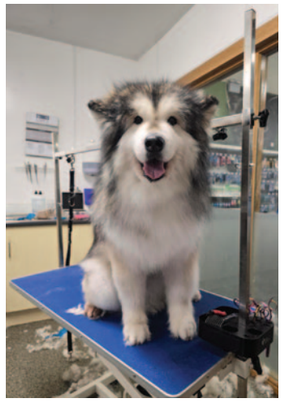
Despite a shifting retail landscape and high street challenges, our Charity Store network demonstrated remarkable resilience, generating a total income of £415,834.60 and delivering a net contribution of £90,114.49.

At the UK Charity Retail Association Awards in Harrogate, the USPCA was shortlisted across five categories. Sue Wallbanks, Banbridge Store Manager was named Retail Employee of the Year, and the Lurgan Charity Shop/Charity Store (led by Fionnuala Ferrin) won Charity Shop/Charity Store of the Year, after also placing in Northern Ireland's top five charity shops in a public vote.

Following financial reviews, the Lisburn store was closed to protect sustainability. Simultaneously, the Belfast Charity Shop/Charity Store was converted into a dedicated E-Commerce Hub, expanding our digital retail footprint to maximise the value of donated goods.

Key store staff were welcomed across Lurgan and Banbridge, while partnering with the JobStart Scheme to recruit team members for the Belfast E-Commerce Hub.

Our teams hosted and participated in landmark community events, including the USPCA Sustainable Market at Banana Block, the Lurgan Show, and sold-out Santa Paws festive experiences.


Grooming

The Grooming Room delivered a standout year, maturing into one of the USPCA's most successful social enterprise initiatives. By combining high welfare standards and operational efficiency with a targeted digital advertising campaign that successfully reached local pet owners, the team drove record client growth and financial performance.

Gross Income	£43,229.33	**£60,388.64**	**+39.7%**
Net Income / Contribution	£712.01	**£13,910.33**	**+1,853.7%**

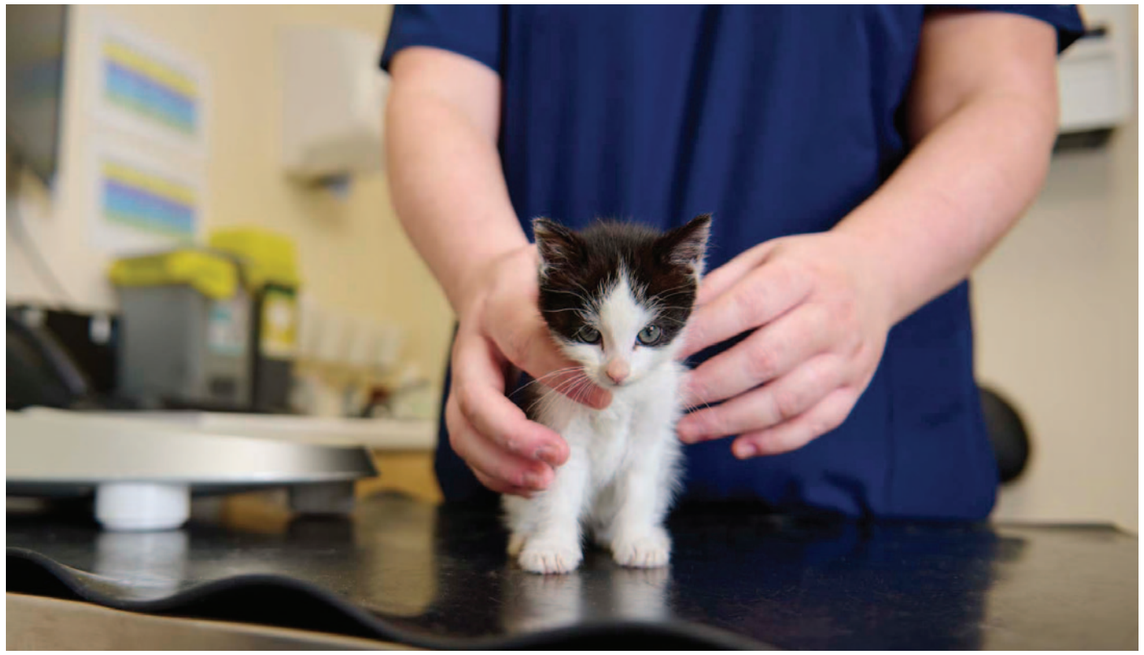
Every pet entrusted to the Grooming Room receives the highest standards of care. The professionalism, compassion and attention to detail from the team have earned an excellent reputation within the local community, resulting in a loyal and growing customer base.

Pet Supplies

Despite facing a challenging trading environment throughout 2025/26, the Pet Supplies department remained a vital operational touchpoint for new adopters, public supporters, and the charity's shelter operations. The store provides new owners with a convenient, comprehensive source for essential food, bedding, toys, and accessories, ensuring newly adopted animals have everything they need to settle smoothly into their forever homes from day one. Additionally, the department powers our online appeals and wish lists, enabling the public to donate critical food and enrichment items directly to the animals receiving shelter care.

Looking ahead, the team remains steadfast in delivering excellent customer service while actively reviewing and adapting the department's retail strategies. By refining our product offerings and aligning operations with evolving consumer habits, we will ensure Pet Supplies continues to meet the needs of adopters and supporters while effectively complementing our broader goals.

Veterinary



The USPCA Veterinary Practice operates on a social enterprise model, meaning every pound of profit generated from our private client services is reinvested directly into our frontline charitable work.

Beyond supporting private pet owners, our dedicated veterinary team provides essential triage, emergency surgery, and ongoing medical care to hundreds of rescued wild animals brought to our clinic each year, preparing them for rehabilitation and eventual release back into the wild.

To ensure financial hardship never stands in the way of essential pet care, the practice offers a 50% charitable discount on veterinary fees for owners receiving qualifying benefits, creating a compassionate safety net for vulnerable pets and wildlife alike.

Community Neutering & Microchipping Success

We successfully concluded our latest community neutering initiative, delivered through our Newry clinic and three partner veterinary practices across Northern Ireland. This vital preventative program achieved outstanding results, completing 709 cat neuters and 734 pet microchipping procedures during the reporting period. The higher microchipping total reflects our targeted offering of free microchipping for local dog owners alongside feline neutering.

This high-impact project was made possible through the generous funding of the Pets at Home Foundation. By addressing the root causes of unwanted litters and ensuring pets are permanently traceable, this initiative directly advances our core mission to prevent cruelty, promote responsible ownership, and keep companion animals healthy and safe.

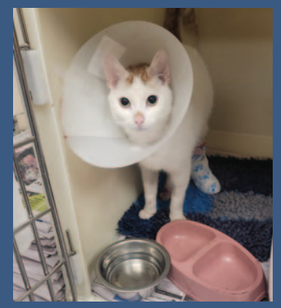


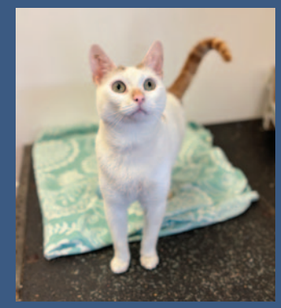
Celebrating Vet Team Achievements

Team members Suzie and Kim officially graduated from Greenmount Campus (CAFRE) in March 2026, becoming fully qualified Registered Veterinary Nurses (RVNs). Having served with the USPCA for several years, their dedication throughout a rigorous academic and practical training programme exemplifies our ongoing commitment to clinical excellence. Their achievement further strengthens our veterinary team and elevates the standard of care provided to both shelter animals and private clients.

Beans









Beans was transferred to the USPCA on 15 May 2025 after he had been hit by a car which resulted in degloving injuries to both hindlimbs. His injuries were so extensive that Beans could have been put to sleep, but the USPCA Head Vet made the decision to take on his complex case and begin the lengthy process of treatment and rehabilitation.

The team were shocked when they saw Beans on arrival. Degloving injuries are serious, as they cause the skin and soft tissue to be torn away from the underlying structures. On paws, they are very difficult to treat due to be stitched closed. Sometimes, it results in amputation which was a major concern for the vet team. They knew amputation wasn't an option for Beans, due to the injuries affecting both hindlimbs.

The USPCA Head Vet began by thoroughly cleaning, flushing and debriding the wounds with Beans under general anaesthetic, as there were small stones from the road embedded in both wounds. Much of the torn skin on both legs was non-viable, apart from a piece on one of his limbs which the team preserved the best they could.

Beans required intensive and dedicated medical attention from the veterinary team. His wounds were regularly cleaned and dressed and soon, the healing process took hold! Beans made a truly miraculous recovery and was happily rehomed with his new best friend, Ishka.

Volunteering









In 2025/26, we welcomed 108 new volunteers to the USPCA. In total, our dedicated volunteers donated 17,423 hours of their time, alongside 1,774 days of fostering and 1,824 days of wildlife rescue support. Their dedication powers every area of our work:

Animal Care
Assisting staff at our centre with daily care, feeding, exercise, and enrichment to ensure the highest standards of health and welfare.

Veterinary Support & Student Placements
Supporting our clinical team in delivering high-quality care to shelter animals and private clients. While we take pride in offering hands-on learning for student courses, student placements have been temporarily paused for the upcoming academic year.

Fostering
Opening their homes to provide temporary, loving care, socialisation, and training for vulnerable domestic animals.

Wildlife Rescue & Care
Supporting emergency rescues across Northern Ireland, transporting animals to our centre or vets, maintaining natural habitats, and aiding rehabilitation for safe release back into the wild.

Pet Food Bank
Packing and preparing pet parcels for distribution to over 55 partner food banks, helping struggling families keep their pets fed.

Grooming Support
Washing and grooming shelter animals to prepare them for adoption, while helping deliver services to private clients to generate key income.

Retail & E-Commerce Hubs
Supporting the day-to-day operation of our charity shops and E-Commerce Hub by sorting donations, pricing stock, serving customers, and driving retail revenue that directly funds animal care.

Corporate Partnership Highlight

We were delighted to welcome 88 corporate volunteers from Citi, who lent their time and energy to support our main centre and retail network. In our centre, Citi volunteers assisted with deep cleaning, organising, and transforming our mezzanine space. In our charity shops, their extra hands proved invaluable in processing and sorting large volumes of donated goods.

Wildlife Rescue Volunteer and Wildlife Fosterer Ian Cooke



On 3 December, I responded to a call regarding a poorly hedgehog at Bellaghy Medical Centre, which had been placed in a box for pickup. When I arrived, the box was right where it should be, but empty! Knowing it was too deep for a sick hedgehog to climb out, I began searching the area. A local woman approached and explained that, not realising a rescue was en route, she had moved the hedgehog to her garden. Thankfully, he was still there, too unwell to move far.

Severely underweight and requiring at least two weeks of intensive medical treatment, there was no way he could survive a winter in the wild. He came home with us for full winter rehabilitation. After months of care, treatment, and weight gain, I was delighted to return to Bellaghy on 19 March to release a healthy, thriving hedgehog back into the wild behind the medical centre where his journey began.

A heartfelt thank you to Ian, and to all our dedicated volunteers and fosterers, whose tireless commitment and compassionate care make happy endings like this possible every day.



Food Banks: Pet Parcel Scheme





As the ongoing cost-of-living crisis continues to place severe financial strain on households across Northern Ireland, many struggling owners are faced with the heartbreaking prospect of surrendering their beloved companions. To combat this, the USPCA delivered 6,773 pet food parcels in 2025/26, partnering with 62 community food banks to distribute essential supplies directly to families in need. Packed with nutritious food, treats, and everyday care essentials, these parcels provide a critical lifeline that keeps pets fed, healthy, and where they belong, at home with the families who love them.

Thanks to vital grant funding awarded by the National Lottery Community Fund in December 2025, we have secured long-term sustainability of this service, ensuring financial hardship never becomes a barrier to keeping pets in the loving homes where they belong.





Fundraising & Events

Legacies & Bequeathments

We would like to record our deepest thanks to those who have remembered the USPCA in their will.

Legacies continued to provide vital long-term support for the USPCA's mission. Between April 2025 and March 2026, the charity received several generous bequeathments to the value of £305,103.85, each representing a deeply personal commitment to animal welfare. These gifts enabled sustained investment in core services including veterinary care, wildlife rescue, and cruelty investigations.

The USPCA recognises that legacy giving is increasingly driven by meaningful, sustained engagement rather than traditional word-of-mouth awareness. Supporters expect connection, communication, and visible impact before making such a personal commitment. Historically, limited capacity within the fundraising function has hindered the organisation's ability to build these long-term relationships across communities in Northern Ireland. As a result, legacy income has shown signs of vulnerability, not due to a decline in public willingness to give, but due to the need for deeper, more consistent engagement with supporters. This insight has shaped the strategic direction of the fundraising function and informed the investment in a modern, community-focused fundraising team.

Pet Pledge Scheme

The USPCA's Pet Pledge scheme offers peace of mind to pet owners by guaranteeing high-quality care and thoughtful rehoming across Northern Ireland in the event of an owner's passing or incapacity. Beyond safeguarding animal welfare, the scheme relieves family members of stressful decisions during times of hardship. Pet Pledge reflects our commitment to honouring the lifelong bond between owners and their pets, ensuring lifetime protection and a smooth transition into a new, carefully chosen home.

Membership

Membership remained a dependable source of unrestricted income and a key driver of supporter engagement. Throughout the year, members received regular updates on rescues, welfare campaigns, and organisational developments, reinforcing their connection to the USPCA's work. A refreshed approach to donor care, supported by improved digital communications and more consistent engagement, contributed to stronger retention and increased participation in events and appeals. Membership continues to be a cornerstone of the USPCA's sustainability.

Monthly Giving – Family First Campaign

A major development during 2025–26 was the introduction of the Family First monthly giving campaign. This marked a new approach to fundraising for the USPCA, focusing on building long-term, meaningful relationships with supporters. The campaign successfully brought in 480 new monthly donors, each providing reliable, predictable income that strengthens the organisation's financial stability.

Monthly donors play a crucial role in helping the USPCA plan ahead with confidence. Their ongoing support ensures that rescue work, veterinary care, and welfare programmes can be delivered consistently throughout the year. With the new fundraising team in place and improved donor stewardship processes, monthly giving has become a sustainable income stream that will continue to grow and support the organisation's future.

The campaign added 480 monthly donors, with an average monthly donation of £10.

USPCA Santa Paws

Santa Paws once again proved to be one of the USPCA's most successful seasonal campaigns. The 2025 event saw strong participation from families, schools, and workplaces, generating significant income and strengthening community connection during the festive period.





Christmas Donation Drive

We ended 2025 on a high with our December Donation Drive, our seasonal digital fundraising campaign. The marketing team harnessed support from local influencers to drive the hero story of rescue dog Ellie, who was the star of the campaign. Thanks to the generosity of our community, the campaign far exceeded expectations, achieving just under £13,000 by the end of December.



Pets at Home Santa Paws

The Pets at Home partnership continued to deliver valuable income and visibility. In-store fundraising, donation-point promotions, and staff engagement helped raise £1,200 while reinforcing the USPCA's presence across Northern Ireland. This collaboration remains an important example of how corporate partnerships can amplify impact.

Balmoral Show

The USPCA's presence at the Balmoral Show provided a major opportunity for public engagement. Staff and volunteers connected with thousands of visitors, raising awareness of the Society's work and securing £1,068.55 in valuable donations. The Show strengthened relationships with rural communities and highlighted the USPCA's role in wildlife protection and animal welfare education.

Welcoming Citi

A significant milestone was the onboarding of Citi as a new corporate partner. Their early engagement, including staff fundraising and volunteering interest, demonstrates the potential of structured corporate development. This partnership marks an important step in expanding the USPCA's corporate portfolio and building long-term, values-aligned relationships.





Beacon Fundraising CRM

The introduction of the Beacon CRM system represented a transformative step in modernising the USPCA's fundraising operations. Beacon provides a cloud-based platform that centralises supporter data, streamlines donation processing, and enables more effective stewardship. Key benefits include improved data accuracy, automated workflows, enhanced insight through real-time dashboards, and greater compliance with GDPR and sector best practice. Beacon has already begun to strengthen the efficiency, professionalism, and scalability of the fundraising function.







Emergence of a Fundraising Team

The development of a new fundraising function has been guided by the strategic leadership of the Head of Fundraising, a role introduced to modernise the USPCA's approach to income generation. This position provides clear direction, sets priorities, and ensures that all fundraising activity aligns with organisational values and long-term sustainability.

To deliver this new strategic direction, the USPCA has invested in professional fundraising roles, designed to expand income streams and strengthen relationships across Northern Ireland.

Four Community Fundraisers will now represent the USPCA at local level, building relationships with businesses, community groups, and supporters. Their work increases visibility, places collection boxes, supports local events, and ensures the USPCA is present and active within communities, creating the meaningful connection required for long-term supporter loyalty, including legacy and monthly giving.

A Corporate, Trusts & Grants Executive leads structured development of corporate partnerships and grant funding, creating sustainable income pipelines and strengthening relationships with organisations committed to animal welfare.

A Donor Care, Database & Administration Officer ensures every supporter receives a warm, consistent, and professional experience, overseeing donation processing, supporter communications, data accuracy, and compliance, all enhanced by the introduction of Beacon CRM.

Together, these roles form a modern, proactive fundraising team with the capacity, skills, and structure required to grow income sustainably while deepening public connection to the USPCA's mission. This investment marks a turning point for the organisation, laying the foundations for stronger community engagement, improved donor stewardship, and long-term financial resilience.

Key Partnerships

We know we can achieve more working together with other animal welfare organisations and wider stakeholders than we can alone. Sharing knowledge, sharing expertise and providing a collective voice to campaign on a wide range of issues to improve the lives of animals is central to our approach.

Northern Ireland Companion Animal Welfare Group (NICAWG)



The Northern Ireland Companion Animal Welfare Group (NICAWG) was established in 2019. It is a sector group that brings together specific expertise and focus, with the aim of improving the welfare of companion animals in Northern Ireland. The USPCA chairs NICAWG, and the membership consists of:

1. Assisi Animal Sanctuary
2. Dogs Trust
3. Cats Protection
4. Mid Antrim Animal Sanctuary
5. PDSA
6. USPCA
7. Rosie's Trust
8. Causeway Coast Dog Rescue
9. Rainbow Rehoming

Collectively we provide services and support for thousands of companion animals across Northern Ireland including pet care clinics, rehoming services, community and school education as well as a range of other services.

Our collective work alongside our elected representatives in Councils and Stormont also provides a strong voice to advance animal welfare across Northern Ireland.

In September 2025, the USPCA participated in a highly successful MLA drop-in event at Stormont, delivered collaboratively through the Northern Ireland Companion Animal Welfare Group (NICAWG). The event provided a vital platform to join partner organisations in engaging key policymakers and campaigning for robust legislative reforms. Key priority areas raised with political representatives included mandatory microchipping for cats, along with statutory regulation and standards for animal rehoming centres and dog daycare facilities across Northern Ireland.

Dog Control Coalition

In November, the USPCA joined the Dog Control Coalition (DCC) with the aim of creating a stronger voice in Northern Ireland for dogs adversely impacted by legislation. A key priority at this time was to collectively engage with elected representatives, councils, and DAERA regarding the impact of the regulations imposed on XL Bully-type dogs.

Along with the other DCC members, we agree that urgent action is needed to protect the public from out-of-control dogs. However, we remain disappointed that the Government has not taken the opportunity to completely overhaul the Dangerous Dogs Act.

The coalition believes that breed-specific legislation (BSL) is ineffective in protecting public safety and leads to the unnecessary suffering and euthanasia of many dogs. We collectively agree that BSL should be repealed, and that issues related to human safety and dog control should be addressed through interventions and effective legislative measures that do not compromise dog welfare.

We will continue to be an active member of the DCC, working together to challenge legislation that adversely impacts dogs while also striving for better measures to support dog owners and the wider public.

Pet Education Partnership (PEP)

The USPCA joined the Pet Education Partnership in May 2023 and is working in collaboration with eight of the leading animal welfare charities in the UK: Blue Cross, Cats Protection, Dogs Trust, PDSA, RSPCA, SSPCA, USPCA and Woodgreen.

Our shared vision is to make animal welfare education accessible to every child aged between 5 and 11 in the UK, with the ultimate goal of incorporating it into the curriculum.

For more information, or if you would like to share details of PEP with a teacher or school, please visit the website:



Marketing & Communications

Expanding Our Digital Reach

In 2025/26, our marketing and communications centred on authentic, story-led content and high-profile campaign work. Rehoming appeals were among our most engaging digital content because sharing animals' journeys connected directly with supporters, drove high engagement and helped pets find loving homes across Northern Ireland. Concurrently, the marketing team spearheaded public outreach for the 'Together' campaign, raising public awareness and mobilising support for an end to hunting with dogs. Crucially, these digital campaigns directly inspired real-world generosity, generating vital monetary donations and essential food contributions.

Our total online audience across Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X, LinkedIn, and Bluesky expanded to 60,873 followers (a 16% increase). TikTok was a standout performer, with growth surging by 160%. Short-form video allowed the team to showcase behind-the-scenes care, wildlife releases, and rehoming highlights, successfully engaging a new generation of animal advocates.

Star Content on Social Media

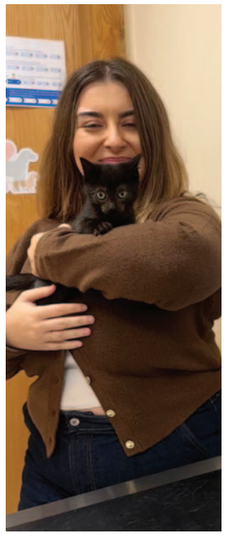
Our digital community continues to be driven by authentic, high-emotion storytelling that highlights the full trajectory of rescue work and behind-the-scenes insight into intensive medical care.



Taz's Rehoming Reel

(Facebook/Instagram)

This reel saw fantastic engagement, capturing Taz's journey from an abandoned kitten in August 2025 to finding his forever home with Breanne 49 days later. The post reached over 334k combined views (including 328k on Facebook), generating 22k reactions and 149 comments from supporters following his transformation.





Bramble's Rehoming Appeal

(Facebook/Instagram)

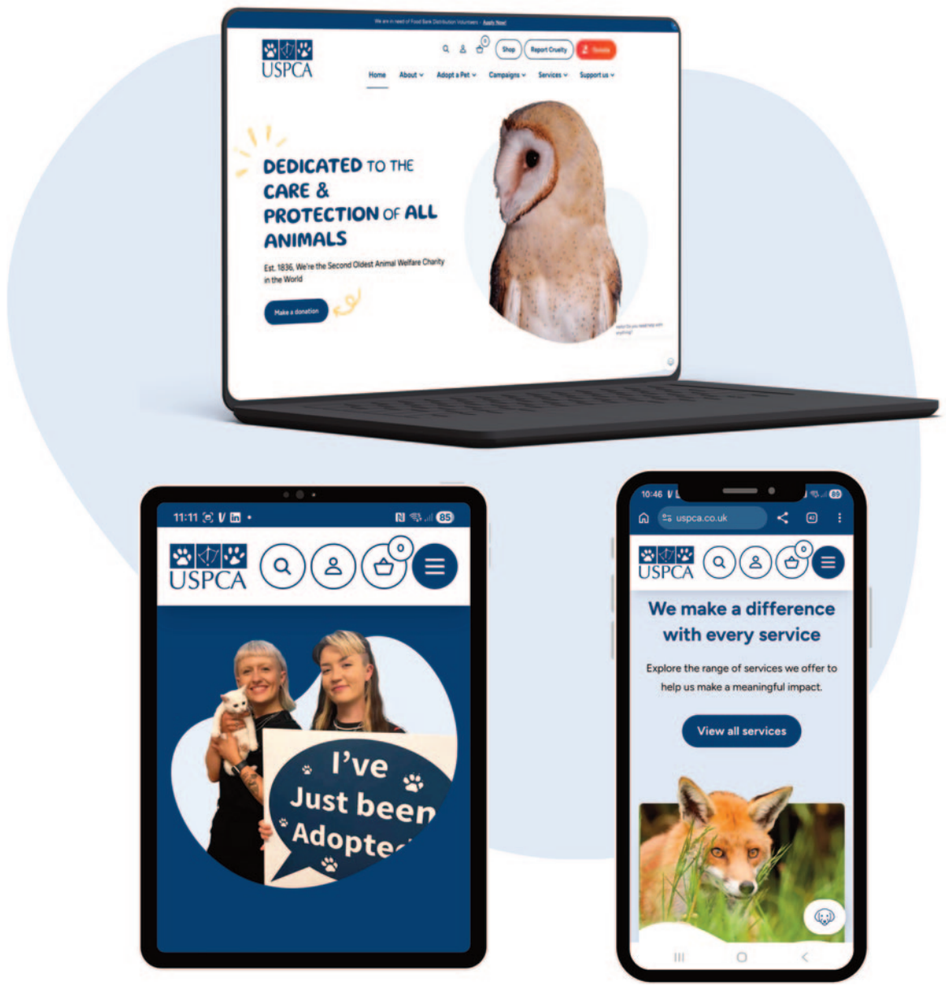
This appeal became our highest-performing single post for reach, drawing 494k views and 34.1k reactions. Rescued as a sick kitten in November 2025, her swift recovery and adoption just two weeks later resonated deeply with our online community, generating over 150 comments.

Eddie's Veterinary Treatment

TikTok Highlight

Achieving 72.7k views and 6k likes, Eddie's story detailed the urgent, intensive care, tail amputation, and pain management provided by our veterinary team following a horrific firework injury, highlighting the vital impact of our medical team.





Building a Better Online Journey for Supporters

In August 2025, the USPCA unveiled a new website and with it, modernised web design. As the second oldest animal welfare charity in the world, maintaining an accessible, effective, and modern digital presence is vital to fulfilling our mission. To support our ongoing growth and streamline operations, we partnered with digital agency Green17 to design and deliver a fully revamped, user-friendly website.

Designed to provide an intuitive experience across all mobile and desktop devices, the new platform features clear navigation and structured content that makes supporting the USPCA easier than ever. By providing a seamless experience for potential adopters, volunteers, and donors, this modern digital hub enhances operational efficiency while deepening public engagement with our welfare work across Northern Ireland.

Looking Ahead

USPCA
PROTECTING ALL ANIMALS ESTD 1836

190 Years
of Compassion & Innovation

As we mark our historic 190th year, our commitment to advancing animal welfare remains stronger than ever. The coming year will focus on modernising our facilities, community growth, and driving systemic change through legislative and strategic partnerships.

Infrastructure & Site Upgrades

We are entering a transformative phase, continuously modernising across our main Newry site to significantly expand operational capacity and elevate standards of frontline care.

We will deliver enhancements to our specialised animal environments, including the dog park, aviary, kennelling facilities and veterinary practice to deliver advanced care and medical treatment on-site.

Sustainable Growth & Fundraising

To secure the organisation's financial resilience for the future, we are scaling our commercial operations through a dedicated e-commerce expansion, developing new digital revenue

streams to directly support our care work.

Alongside digital growth, we will energise and broaden our fundraising network by deepening strategic relationships with corporate partners and cultivating grassroots support across local communities.

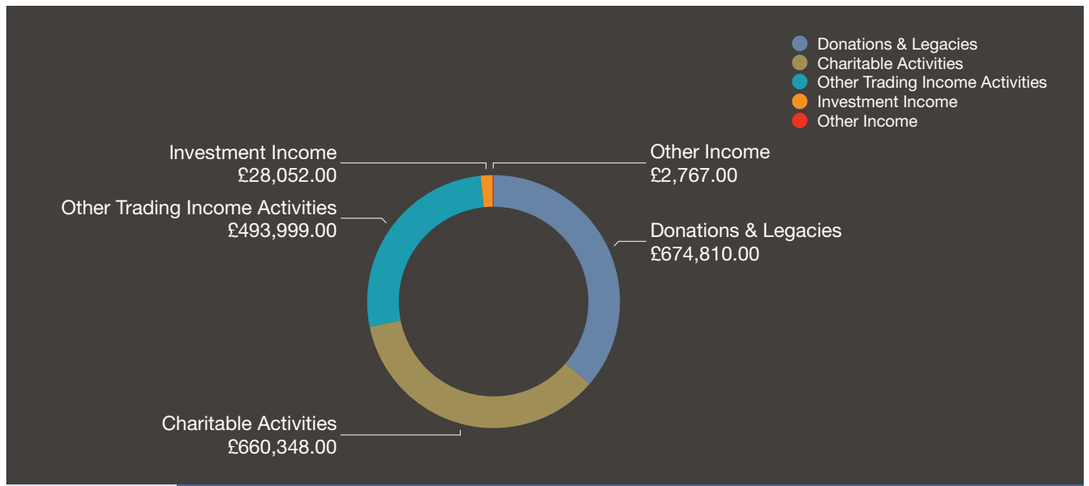
Advocacy, Services & Strategic Partnerships

Systemic progress remains central to our mission as we support the advancement of the Hunting with Dogs Bill through Assembly Committee scrutiny, leveraging crucial legislative momentum to strengthen regional animal protections.

At the same time, we are adapting our core rescue and welfare services to meet rising demand, backed by formal collaborations with Queen's University, City & Guilds, and the PSNI to drive research, accredited professional training, and develop practical, solution-focused relationships with enforcement agencies.

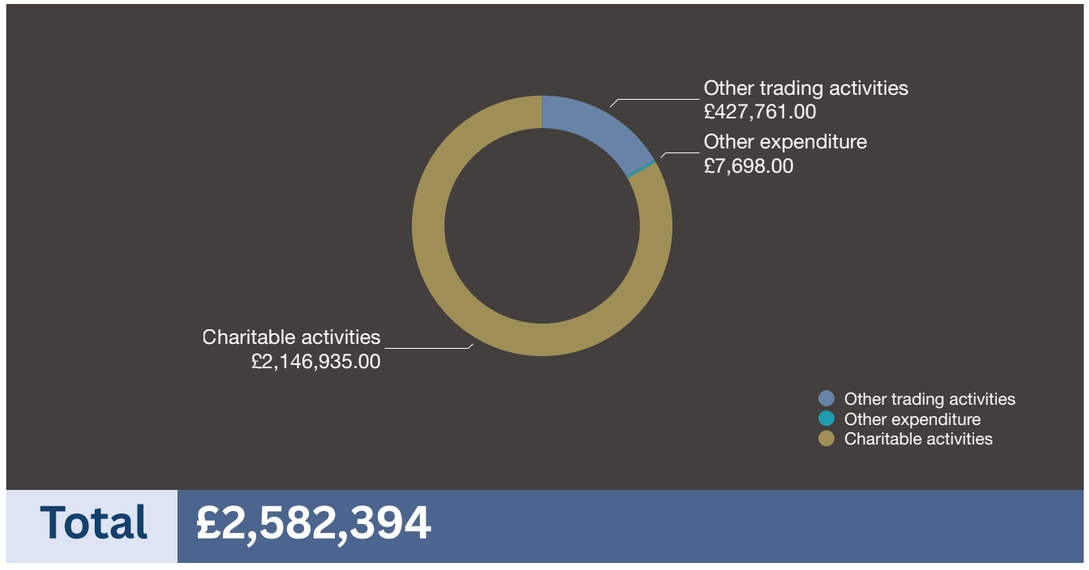


Income



Total **£1,859,976**

Expenditure



Total **£2,582,394**

At a glance

In 2025/26, it cost £2,582,394 to run the charity and deliver its services, 13.1% more than in the previous year. The charity ended the year with a deficit of £569,408, compared with a surplus of £1.10 million in 2024/25. This significant year-on-year movement was driven mainly by a sharp fall in legacy income, the absence of one-off gains received in the previous year, and planned investment in services, fundraising and organisational capacity.

Investing for long-term sustainability

During the year, the Board approved a programme of planned investment to strengthen the charity's leadership, financial management, income generation, facilities and digital infrastructure. The principal areas of investment were:

- Strengthening the senior leadership team and establishing a new Income and Innovation Team to generate additional unrestricted income and reduce the uncertainty associated with the charity's historic reliance on legacy income.
- Bringing the finance function back in-house, appointing a new Finance Manager and developing a Corporate Services Team to oversee contracts and procurement, strengthen compliance, and improve internal controls and risk management. Payroll remains externally managed.
- Investing in the Newry facility to improve animal environments and increase energy efficiency, including an LED lighting replacement programme and the installation of solar panels. Investing in digital infrastructure, including a new website, contactless giving technology, a new fundraising CRM system and enhanced Cyber security.
- Partnering with the Family First Fundraising agency to increase the number of regular monthly donors. This initiative requires significant upfront investment, with a net return on investment expected from year five.

Financial strength and resilience

Although the charity reported a deficit, it remained financially resilient at year end. Cash increased, borrowing reduced and unrestricted reserves remained substantial. The principal ongoing financial risk is the charity's exposure to the natural volatility of legacy income.

- Reserves provided a strong financial cushion. Unrestricted reserves available to spend were £2.47 million, within total funds of £4.16 million. The Trustees considered this sufficient to support the charity's continued operation, and the auditor identified no material uncertainty in relation to going concern.
- Cash increased and debt reduced. Cash rose from £253,716 to £479,949, supported by net investment sales of £487,978. Bank loans reduced from £347,136 to £308,644, and interest costs fell from £21,305 to £17,947.
- Short-term resources remained healthy, although lower than the previous year. Net current assets reduced by £270,312 to £1.56 million, reflecting higher current creditors and lower debtors.

Building a broader and more reliable income base

- Legacy income remains the greatest source of volatility. It fell from £1.91 million to £459,959. The Trustees continue to identify lower legacy and voluntary income as the charity's principal income risk.
- Income earned through services continued to grow. Veterinary-services income increased by 19.7% to £519,950; adoption fees more than doubled to £42,074; and total social enterprise income increased by 3.6% to £493,999.
- Regular-giving income is being developed. The new fundraising function secured 540 new monthly donors, giving an average of £10.24 per month. This is a long-term investment and was not yet a material contributor to income in 2025/26.



Strategy Objectives to 2029

The development of the USPCA's 2026-2029 Corporate Strategy reflects a deliberate and collaborative approach in shaping our future direction. As we conclude our previous strategy, we have taken time to reflect on our achievements, challenges and the changing environment in which we operate, ensuring that the lessons learned inform our ambitions for the years ahead.







The new strategy has been informed by extensive engagement with our Board of Trustees, staff, volunteers, members and key external partners, whose insights, experience and perspectives have helped shape our priorities and focus areas. Through a combination of stakeholder workshops, pulse surveys, consultation sessions and strategic discussions, we sought to create meaningful opportunities for people to contribute and influence the future direction of the organisation.

This commitment recognises that those who support, deliver and benefit from our work are best placed to help identify both the opportunities and the challenges that lie ahead. We've developed a shared roadmap that builds on our heritage, responds to emerging needs and provides a clear direction for how we will strengthen animal welfare, grow our impact and deliver meaningful change across Northern Ireland over the next three years.

Importantly, this process has reinforced our belief that lasting change is achieved when people feel heard, involved and connected to a common purpose. The 2026-2029 Corporate Strategy represents our collective commitment to working together to create a kinder society for animals and the people who care for them.

Vision "A society where all animals are respected and free of unnecessary suffering."

Purpose The prevention of cruelty to animals, the relief of animal suffering and the advancement of animal welfare.

OUR THREE STRATEGIC PILLARS



Our Animals



Our People



Our Business

Three Year Objectives 2026–2029

1. We will modernise and invest in our facilities
2. We will expand our reach across Northern Ireland
3. We will champion system-level improvements in animal welfare across Northern Ireland
4. We will support and invest in our team
5. We will attract, support, train and retain exceptional people
6. We will strengthen our people, culture and internal communication
7. We will strengthen our financial sustainability
8. We will strengthen our brand visibility
9. We will improve our operational foundations and modernise our systems
10. We will demonstrate excellence at all levels

Our Values

Unity

We work together with each other, our local communities, our partners, our volunteers and our supporters, uniting as one team to achieve our founding principle - the relief of suffering in animals, prevention of cruelty and the advancement of animal welfare - because meaningful, lasting change is only achieved through shared effort and true collaboration.

Safeguarding

We are committed to safeguarding animals from cruelty, neglect, and harm. We take pride in delivering outstanding care, striving for excellence, and creating real, measurable improvements across the charity, to ensure that every animal receives protection, care, and the opportunity for a life free from suffering.

Passion

We care about each other, every animal and every person we support - our passion and compassion for animals, and each other defines who we are and what we do. We treat every animal and every person we encounter with kindness, empathy and respect – recognising that diversity and inclusion guide our actions, decisions and voice.

Courage

We act with integrity and courage in the face of injustice and cruelty towards animals. We do the right thing, even when no one is watching. We are open, honest, transparent and accountable.

Advocacy

We encourage, educate and support people to advocate for animal welfare. We speak out with confidence, challenge cruelty, promote humane treatment across society and drive positive change – giving a voice to animals who cannot speak for themselves.

Thank You: To Everyone Who Makes Our Mission Possible

The impact wouldn't be possible without the people, and at the USPCA there are many people behind the scenes working tirelessly to ensure a better future for animals. So thank you:

The Animal Care Team: You're the reason so many unwanted, abandoned, and neglected animals now have loving homes. You are the first comforting family they know when they walk through our doors, pouring countless hours into their daily care, comfort, and emotional rehabilitation.

The Wildlife Rescue Team: You are helping native wildlife thrive right across Northern Ireland. From the high-stakes moments of rescue and dedicated rehabilitation to that exhilarating, beautiful moment of release back into the wild, your dedication is unmatched.

The Veterinary Team: Your clinical expertise, patience, and profound compassion mean that countless animals survive trauma, are relieved of suffering, and are given a second chance at a happy, healthy life.

The SIU Team: You are on the front lines, actively exposing and dismantling networks of organised animal cruelty. Your courage and determination are making Northern Ireland a significantly safer place for animals.

The Commercial Team: You turn everyday customer interactions into vital lifelines. Every pound you generate goes straight back into supporting our charitable mission and helping animals in need.

Our Board of Trustees: Your strategic vision, governance, and steady guidance steer this organisation forward, ensuring we can continue to be a strong, enduring voice and lifeline for animals in need.

Our Service Users, Supporters, and Volunteers: Your unwavering generosity, time, and compassion are the bedrock of everything we do.Through donating, volunteering, or sharing our mission, you prove every single day that animal welfare is a community-powered effort. Thank you for standing by us and helping us change lives.

USPCA

PROTECTING ALL ANIMALS ESTD 1836

Ulster Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
Unit 5/6 Carnbane Industrial Estate
Newry BT35 6PQ

NI Charity Number. NIC102755.