



Reg Charity 203644 (England and Wales) SC037711 (Scotland)

# Investigation of heart murmurs in cats in CP care

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Cats Protection frequently faces the dilemma of when to fund the costs of diagnostic workups for cats in its care in which heart murmurs have been detected. Certainly heart murmurs are common in cats and the costs of screening can markedly increase the costs associated with rehoming work. A recent study (Wagner and Fuentes et al, 2010) indicated a high prevalence of around 33 per cent of cats in CP care having heart murmurs, only around 50 per cent of those cats had any evidence of structural heart disease (the majority being mild), while around 25 per cent of those cats without murmurs did have ultrasonographic findings of structural heart disease.

In general, CP currently recommends that CP branches and adoption centres consider funding further cardiac work up for cats in CP care with clinical signs of heart disease and where funds allow, those asymptomatic cats and kittens:-

- With an arrhythmia and/or
- With a gallop rhythm and/or
- Which are asymptomatic but have a persistent heart murmur of grade 5/6 or 6/6

It is generally recommended not to fund further cardiac work up for a cat in CP care which has a heart murmur of grade 1/6 to 4/6 if the cat is asymptomatic and has no arrhythmia or gallop rhythm. However, potential owners would be made fully aware when adopting such cats that a heart murmur had been detected, that the cause of the murmur was unknown and the prognosis for the cat was unknown. After adoption it would then be up to the owner to decide whether to undertake further investigations in consultation with their own vet. Of course, a case-by-case approach will still be needed and there may be situations where deviation from the above guidelines would be appropriate.