

The GCCF Breeder Scheme Standard

This Standard includes all of the rules, requirements and expectations necessary for Scheme Breeders to operate under the GCCF Breeder Scheme. These are set out below under seven sections:

- Application
- Scheme Breeders
- Facilities
- Cats Kept
- Breeding
- Sale of Cats and Kittens
- Lifetime care

An essential action or commitment is shown in bold and any explanation that may be useful will surround or follow the bold text.

Text in italics indicates the way in which compliance is checked.

Terms

“Scheme Breeder” refers to any person, who has been accepted as a member of the Scheme.

“Scheme” refers to the GCCF Breeder Scheme

“Buyer” refers to anyone purchasing or receiving a Cat or Kitten from a Scheme Breeder.

“Standards Assessor” refers to a trained official working on behalf of the GCCF to carry out assessments of facilities.

“Assessment Visit” refers to an assessment inspection visit to confirm compliance with this standard.

“Kitten” refers to any Kitten or Cat sold by a member of the Scheme.

“Breed” refers to the physical characteristics and features that can reasonably be expected or are likely to commonly appear in the Cats owned or bred by the member.

Further information on how to comply with the Scheme Standard can be found in the Guidance to Breeder Scheme which is available on the GCCF website www.gccfcats.org or by contacting the GCCF Office.

- 1) **Application** In order to be eligible for Scheme membership and to remain a Scheme Breeder, applicants must:

1.1) Complete the application form and sign the declaration/tick the box.

Applicants must read and familiarise themselves with all the rules of the Scheme, as contained in this standard, and be comfortable that they will be able to fulfil the criteria, including all breed-specific health testing and screening, before submitting an application. By signing the declaration (or ticking the box in the case of an online application) the applicant is committing to abide by the Scheme rules and requirements. Any breach or non-compliance of Scheme rules and regulations may result in rejection, suspension or withdrawal of membership.

Applicants must note the Scheme disclaimer printed on the application form. If the applicant is under 18 years old, a parent/guardian must countersign the application, by way of guarantee for the young person's obligations. The parent or guardian will become fully responsible for all obligations under the terms of the Scheme, either legal or financial.

All applications will be fully considered. Further information to ensure that the applicant is capable of meeting the Scheme requirements may be required and an Assessment Visit will be carried out to ensure that the GCCF is satisfied the applicant is fully capable of meeting the requirements of the Scheme. An application may be subject to Committee approval and the GCCF reserves the right to refuse an application.

All applications must be accompanied by the current annual fee. For current application fees please visit the GCCF website.

Application forms will not be passed for processing unless the Declaration is signed (or ticked online) and the correct fee is submitted.

1.2) Supply a brief written statement for publication, accurately outlining their experience and involvement in the breed(s) or type of cats that they produce.

Statements of experience are updated during an Assessment Visit or may be updated by the GCCF at the Scheme Breeder's request.

It is the Scheme Breeder's responsibility to inform the GCCF which registered breed club they belong to so that records may be checked with the club. Information is shared with breed club secretaries to confirm breed club membership.

1.3) Undertake to give the GCCF the opportunity to review compliance procedures and to investigate any anomalies or complaints by means of an Assessment Visit or other methods.

Assessment Visits will be conducted by suitably trained personnel employed or working on behalf of the GCCF who may be accompanied by observers. Visits will also occur on a routine basis and an absolute minimum of once every three years prior to renewal of membership. They may also be carried out additionally and randomly having given reasonable notice. Additional visits will be carried out following notification that the member has moved

to, or is using, alternative or additional premises, or if the GCCF has reasonable cause for concern that there may be breaches of the Scheme rules or its standard. Scheme Breeders must notify the GCCF, within 3 months or before their next litter is due, whichever is sooner, if they move premises or commence using alternative premises for the purposes of breeding. At any time during the investigation of a complaint, a Scheme Breeder may be suspended from using or operating under the Scheme, pending the conclusion of such an investigation. During suspension, kittens must not be sold under the Scheme. There is a GCCF complaints procedure which will be followed in the case of a complaint by a buyer of a kitten under the Scheme. A copy of this procedure is available from the GCCF. Further information on Assessment Visits can be found at www.gccfcats.org or by contacting the GCCF Office.

If a Scheme Breeder refuses or cancels an Assessment Visit from a Standards Assessor, without providing a reasonable explanation and arranging a further date, their membership will be suspended until such time as a satisfactory visit is completed. If a Scheme Breeder is unable to accept a visit within their mandatory 3-year re-visitation period, their membership may fall uncertified and they may be removed from the membership list. If there is an unsatisfactory outcome following an Assessment Visit and any required improvements are not made within the timeframe stated, membership will be suspended and no refund will be due. A detailed indication of what an Assessment visit entails is available from the GCCF at any time and will be sent to each Scheme Breeder when an Assessment Visit date has been confirmed.

1.4) Renew their membership on or prior to expiry. Membership of the Scheme will be for three years, or for periods of three years. Annual fees are payable to ensure continued membership. Litter Registration applications are not accepted by the GCCF from Scheme Breeders unless their membership is either maintained or is resigned.

Scheme Breeders must not advertise or describe themselves as a Scheme Breeder, use any Scheme Breeder literature or hold themselves out in any way as a Scheme Breeder, unless their membership is current and valid. Any Scheme Breeder that is lapsed, suspended or whose membership is expired, or where a fee is overdue will have their name removed from the current membership list and a new membership certificate will not be issued.

Membership renewal notices are sent out well before membership is due to expire, and if payment is not received, membership status becomes inactive. Scheme Breeders whose membership payments are not up to date are issued with a choice to renew or resign upon submission of an application to register a litter. Any outstanding fees are payable immediately. Members whose payments have lapsed will not be permitted to re-join the Scheme until any arrears have been cleared.

1.5) Not reapply to join the Scheme for three years if their application is rejected. An application may be rejected if it does not meet with the strict criteria laid out in this Standard. Applications with minor non-conformities may have their initial application refused and may be given an opportunity to rectify these shortfalls.

1.6) Not use the Breeder Scheme or associated logos prior to receiving confirmation of acceptance onto the Scheme. Only Scheme Breeders are entitled to use the Scheme logos, as set out in the logo use agreement provided that they are active members of the Breeder Scheme. If any logo is used inappropriately, the individual will be asked to remove the logo and may be prevented from joining the Scheme or their membership suspended or rejected. Any documentation relating to membership that is reproduced for others must be produced in its entirety.

2) Scheme Breeders

In order to be eligible for Scheme membership and to remain a Scheme Breeder, applicants/members must:

2.1) Ensure all breeding stock and kittens are registered with the GCCF

Registrations must be made according to current Breed registration policies.

2.2) As a minimum, to have bred and registered with the GCCF one litter in the last three years.

For reference, the breeding age for a queen is considered to be >9 months old at the time of mating.

Checks on breeding history are done at the time of submission of application.

2.3) Bring to the attention of the GCCF anything which may affect their application or continuation on the Scheme and not act in any manner that would bring the Scheme into disrepute. It is the Scheme Breeder's responsibility to bring to the attention of the GCCF any change to their circumstances which affects their activities. This includes events such as change of address, change of environment, significant changes to staff or care arrangements. Any person with a conviction involving an animal welfare offence, or subject to disciplinary penalties under GCCF Rules and Byelaws, will be ineligible to join the Scheme. Additionally, any existing member will be suspended from the Scheme for the duration of any sentence imposed by a court (including any conditional or suspended sentence) or for the duration of the period of disqualification set by the GCCF Disciplinary Committee, whichever is the longer. After such time, any application to join the Scheme must include satisfactory written reassurances and undertakings that the applicant has appropriate resources in place to meet the welfare requirements of the cats then in their care and control and will require a satisfactory inspection before acceptance of the application.

Any conduct considered to be incompatible with membership of the Breeder Scheme or contrary to the spirit of the Scheme, or likely to undermine the Scheme, may result in an application for membership being rejected or the Scheme Breeder's removal from the Scheme.

System records are checked at the time of application and on an ongoing basis. The GCCF reserves the right to share information with other organisations to ensure compliance.

2.4) Commit to operate to high standards and duty of care and comply with all relevant local and national regulatory requirements including the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and others which may be introduced. These include provisions to address an animal's:

- (a) need for a suitable environment,
- (b) need for a suitable diet,
- (c) need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns,
- (d) need to be housed with, or apart from, other animals
- (e) need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

Local authorities have varying regulations and it is the responsibility of each scheme member to check that they operate in accordance with local regulations.

Operating standards and compliance with relevant codes of practice and local authority requirements will be verified during an Assessment Visit.

2.5) Participate in any feline health survey or reasonable health initiative in their breed(s). Collection of health data in all breeds of cat is an urgent priority and any Scheme Breeder is expected to assist in this process.

2.6) Keep, for a minimum of 10 years, a record of all cats, matings and kittens up until the point of transfer. Records must include, as a minimum:

- Registration details including breed or description of type, registration number, name, sex, date of birth, date of ownership and pedigree certificate
- Date of transfer (change of ownership)
- Mating details (dates, matings performed)
- Details of Kittens produced
- Health screening test results
- Permanent identification details
- Date (and cause) of death (if known)
- Date of sale of kittens and contact details of buyers
- Any veterinary treatment
- Details of kittens at birth e.g. date of birth, number, sex, colour and any other identifying marks, any dead and cause of death if known, any abnormalities noted.
- A record of any complaints received
- A record of any exceptional events or breeding decisions that have the potential to result in a failure to meet the Scheme standard.

Kittens must be registered at the time of sale.

A Standards Assessor will confirm this during an Assessment Visit.

2.7) Not use Breeder Scheme membership to promote the breeding of crossbreeds.

Buyers are asked for feedback. A Standards Assessor will also confirm this during an Assessment Visit.

2.8) Only sell, or advertise for sale, cats and kittens bred by themselves. Scheme Breeders will sell only kittens bred by themselves and raised at the breeder's premises—which will meet all the requirements of the Breeder Scheme. They are also expected to select from breeding stock that is known to them and where they are able to provide assurances of every aspect of the kitten's upbringing. Commercial interests are expected to be secondary and the selling of kittens bred by third parties strictly for commercial gain is not accepted. Membership of the Scheme must be the same as the recorded registered ownership of any breeding stock. Where multiple memberships or partnership arrangements are maintained, the contract of sale and any accompanying documentation must clearly record this and it is the member's responsibility to confirm in writing absolute clarity with the buyer. Under exceptional circumstances, and following receipt of written permission from the GCCF, the Scheme Breeder may be allowed to sell Kittens not bred by themselves, on condition that the circumstances and reasons for the sale are made clear, in writing, to the buyer. The conditions of sale and the rules and responsibilities under the Breeder Scheme will still apply.

Buyers are asked for feedback. A Standards Assessor will also confirm this during an Assessment Visit.

2.9) Inform the GCCF in writing prior to the registration application, if a litter does not meet all of the current requirements or recommendations of the Scheme. Additionally, the Scheme Breeder must inform, in writing, each of the buyers or whoever takes ownership at the earliest opportunity and prior to any sale taking place. Requirements and recommendations are subject to change from time to time and it is the responsibility of the Scheme Breeder to ensure that they comply with these. It is accepted that under exceptional circumstances (such as an accidental mating), a litter may not meet all of the requirements of the Breeder Scheme. This may be due to matters outside the Scheme Breeders' control or where they have not been made completely aware of current circumstances. Any such event will be considered by the GCCF on its own merit and these occasions are expected to be limited; repeated requests for exceptions will not be tolerated and may result in suspension. Where these exceptional events occur, the Scheme Breeder must keep a record of why and how the event occurred, any mitigating circumstances and a plan to reduce such incidents going forward.

Buyers are asked for feedback. A Standards Assessor will also confirm this during an Assessment Visit.

2.10) Adhere to GCCF rules and Byelaws. The GCCF rules are set out in the GCCF Rule Book which is issued periodically, and is available on request.

2.11) Ensure that he/she has a clear understanding of the GCCF's ethos and values associated with the GCCF Breeder Scheme objectives. Members must at all times act in accordance with the GCCF Breeder Scheme requirements and

recommendations, Code of Practices as amended from time to time, applicable laws (particularly Consumer protection legislation), and good industry practice. Additionally, they must ensure that any associated or connected person also complies with all such requirements, and not do or omit to do anything which may be prejudicial to or denigrate, defame or cause damage to the reputation of the GCCF Breeder Scheme.

3) Facilities

In order to be eligible for Scheme membership and to remain a Scheme Breeder, applicants/members must:

3.1) Ensure that facilities where cats are kept, including kitting facilities, are constructed to a reasonable standard, kept in a good state of repair and in accordance with good practice and health and safety requirements, including provisions for emergencies. Consideration must be given to the suitable construction of facilities, including cattery buildings where appropriate, or within the Scheme Breeder's home. Facilities must be of good construction, made from materials that are able to be kept clean and free from infectious disease. Particular consideration must be given to materials used in the construction of floors and other areas vulnerable to soiling. Consideration must be given to the wellbeing of the cats and also of neighbouring facilities and must include consideration to minimise noise.

If a Scheme Breeder uses more than one location for keeping and/or breeding cats, the GCCF must be informed, so that adequate time may be allocated when assigning Assessment Visits and all premises must form part of the visit. If there are issues of concern arising from an Assessment Visit and it is considered that the facilities fall short of the standards expected for a Scheme Breeder, this may result in removal from the Scheme or an application being rejected. It is a condition of the Scheme that Scheme Breeders agree to the GCCF referring any area of concern relating to the welfare of Cats to the appropriate authority.

A Standards Assessor will check all facilities.

3.2) Provide a safe and secure environment for each cat which is spacious and in proportion to the number of cats kept. The environment must be comfortable and such that cats are not exposed to situations which result in repeated or prolonged signs of anxiety or fear. An adequate number of individuals and/or staff, must be available to care for the number of Cats kept.

A Standards Assessor will expect to see that this appears to be true.

3.3) Provide clean and comfortable accommodation with adequate heat, light and ventilation, with particular regard to the animal's health, age and breed. All cats must be kept in an environment which enables them to display normal behavioural characteristics, such as social behaviour, Breed-specific behavioural requirements must also be taken into account, for example through the provision of sufficient enrichment and exercise appropriate to the individual breed.

Accommodation must be cleaned daily and waste removed as appropriate and at least twice daily. Appropriate and clean bedding material must be available. Adequate routine cleaning procedures must be in place to ensure that the environment remains clean and free from infectious diseases. A standard operating procedure to administer this must be in place. Where Cats are kept within a domestic home environment this must be suitable for the number of Cats present. Where accommodation that has been specifically designed for the keeping of Cats is provided, such as a cattery, all internal surfaces used in the construction of walls, floors, partitions, doors and door frames must be durable, smooth, impervious or easily cleansed. Where cats kept for breeding are living in domestic premises, such as a family home, adequate and appropriate measures must be taken to ensure adequate hygiene. In all cases adequate space must be available for the cats to exhibit normal behaviour patterns and sleeping areas and bedding facilities must be available for each cat.

A Standards Assessor will check all facilities, procedures and practices.

3.4) Provide a suitable and adequate diet. Cats must be able to satisfy their thirst and have access to clean drinking water at all times. Suitable facilities, hygienically constructed and maintained, must be provided for the storage and preparation of food for the cats.

A Standards Assessor will note the condition of the cats and will expect to see adequate drinking water and a supply of food available for the cats kept.

3.5) Take reasonable precautions to prevent the spread of infectious diseases and facilities must be available for the treatment of cats in an emergency. Adequate arrangements or plans must be available for the isolation of sick or injured animals and for the transportation of animals to and from the Scheme Breeder's establishment for veterinary treatment.

Scheme Breeders will be asked to outline their contingency plans during an Assessment Visit.

3.6) Ensure that all medications are used as per manufacturer's instructions, are within their expiry date and have a current marketing authorisation for sale in the UK. Medications must be kept in a suitable storage area, inaccessible to cats, other animals and children, and must be protected from light and extremes of temperature where relevant. Cats must not normally be given human medications, unless otherwise advised by a veterinary surgeon. Prescribed medicines must be used only for the specific animals to which they are prescribed, unless otherwise advised by a veterinary surgeon.

Arrangements must be in place to deal with any minor injuries that can be treated at home.

A Standards Assessor will confirm this during an Assessment Visit.

4) Cats kept

In order to be eligible for Scheme membership and to remain a Scheme Breeder, applicants/members must:

4.1) Ensure that all cats used for breeding are selected for health and temperament. cats must also be reasonably typical of their breed in terms of appearance and characteristics. Breed descriptions and breed standards are widely available and are accessible via the GCCF website.

A Standards Assessor will confirm this during an Assessment Visit.

4.2) Ensure that a veterinary health plan, as agreed with their veterinary surgeon/s, is in place. This must provide for the treatment of any signs of disease or illness, in a timely manner.

Records of any clinical veterinary treatment provided to cats during any time whilst in the member's care, must be easily accessible and will be viewed during an Assessment visit. A Standards Assessor will ask for the name and address of the Scheme Breeder's usual veterinary practice/s.

4.3) Ensure that all breeding stock and in-contact cats are protected by routine immunisation against current common infectious diseases, unless advised otherwise by a veterinary surgeon. All cats must be examined and treated where relevant for internal and external parasites. Details of immunisation and any other treatments must be kept for each cat and be up to date.

A Standards Assessor will confirm this during an Assessment Visit.

4.4) Permanently identify breeding stock by microchip. Kittens must be permanently identified by microchip prior to, or at the time of receiving their second vaccination. Microchipping of Cats must be carried out by a trained implanter and the relevant number must be registered on a national database.

A Standards Assessor will ask to see evidence of this and records of a method of permanent identification are checked at the time of application to register a litter.

4.5) Adequately socialise and domesticate kittens prior to sale. Socialisation must be started by the Scheme Breeder and continued until sale.

Buyers are asked for feedback. A Standards Assessor will also confirm this during an Assessment visit.

4.6) Ensure that all cats and kittens kept benefit from adequate routine grooming where required Longhair and Semi-longhair cats in particular, will require grooming on a regular basis.

A detailed outline of a grooming routine will be required during an Assessment visit.

5) Breeding

In order to remain a Scheme Breeder, members must:

5.1) Make health of breeding stock and Kittens produced a particular priority. Scheme Breeders must take all reasonable steps to ensure that breeding stock is of good physical and genetic health, of acceptable temperament and fit for function (e.g. be able to see, breathe normally, be physically fit and able to exercise freely).

Breeders must not breed from cats which exhibit any of the defects listed in the Guide to defects listed in the GCCF standard of points. The guide to defects can be found on the GCCF website. In addition, the registration policy for each breed lists health tests which must be carried out on the queen and stud before a litter of kittens can be registered. The breeding policies for each breed provide further guidance.

Some additional genetic tests may be available for certain breeds and these tests should also be considered

Use of required breed-specific testing is checked automatically at the time of litter registration.

5.2) Ensure that the genealogical relationship between animals is a consideration when selecting breeding stock. Scheme Breeders are required to demonstrate that inbreeding coefficients have been considered in their breeding strategy. This must be done using the facility available on the GCCF website. The inbreeding coefficient should be as low as possible and must not exceed 25. Permission to exceed this value must be sought in advance of mating from the breed-specific BAC.

A Standards Assessor will ask to see evidence of this

5.3) Specifically ensure that breeding stock does not contravene GCCF Rules and advice relating to the health and welfare of breeding queens and kittens.

The GCCF will not accept an application to register a litter when:

- (1) The queen has already had three litters in two years
- (2) The queen has already had two litters delivered by caesarean section.

Checks on breeding history are done during the assessment visit.

5.4) Follow Scheme rules for every litter bred. It is essential that every litter bred, irrespective of the breed, accords with Scheme requirements. A Scheme Breeder cannot opt to breed one breed in a responsible way and another less responsibly.

Every time an Assured Breeder applies to register a litter, fulfilment of the scheme requirements is checked. A Standards Assessor will want to see all cats kept.

5.5) When offering the use of a stud cat, draw up and retain a copy of any Contract of Stud Cat Service for each service performed. This must include

details of the conditions of that service and results of all relevant health tests performed in accordance with the Breeder Scheme. As a minimum, if a stud cat is used for breeding with queens originating from outside the breeder's household/cattery, then he must be tested negative for FIV/FelV at least annually.

A Standards Assessor will ask to see a copy of contracts and evidence of test results during an Assessment Visit.

6) Sale of cats and kittens

In order to be eligible for Scheme membership and to remain a Scheme Breeder, members must:

6.1) Take all reasonable steps to ensure that the buyer is able to provide a suitable home and that they are committed to caring for the cat for the whole of its life.

A Standards Assessor will consult during an Assessment Visit on the re-homing of both kittens and adults, which may include ex-breeding stock. Buyers are also asked for feedback.

6.2) Ensure that the kitten has been inspected by a veterinary surgeon prior to sale, and pass any record of veterinary treatment or examination to the new owner. Confirmation of veterinary examination or evidence of a vet check must be passed to the new owner. Veterinary checks would normally be performed at the time of vaccination.

6.3) Issue relevant information for each kitten sold (Kitten Pack). The Kitten Pack is central to the Scheme and must contain all of the up-to-date written information that Scheme Breeders are required to give to buyers or new kitten owners. This must include advice on: socialisation, grooming, feeding, worming and immunisation regime, as well as details of identification. Additionally, features and characteristics likely to appear in the kittens, particularly those which may be considered to be specific to the type or breed of cat, together with copies of health screening certificates must be included in the Kitten Pack. The information must be appropriate and specific to the breed, type and age of each cat or kitten. The Scheme Breeder must also provide their own contact details to all buyers.

A New Owner Questionnaire will be sent to new owners at the time of transfer.

From these completed forms, it is possible to get a clear indication of which Scheme Breeders are not providing the information that they are required to. Occasionally, new owners are contacted directly and asked to complete a questionnaire.

6.4) Hand over to the new owner or provide electronically, at the time of sale the following documents as specified in GCCF rules:

1. Pedigree certificate – a three generation pedigree showing registration numbers, Gems codes and signed by the breeder.
2. Registration document including an explanation of active and non-active registration

3. Insurance cover note
4. Microchip documentation
5. Any health test results for the kitten, sire and dam (where appropriate)

All documentation must include the kitten's microchip number

Kitten buyers are asked for feedback.

6.5) Provide reasonable after-sales advice and endeavour to deal with any issues arising in good faith.

Kitten buyers are asked for feedback.

6.6) Inform buyers of the requirements and recommendations that apply to GCCF Scheme Breeders, as well as the existence of the complaints procedure.

Kitten buyers are asked for feedback.

6.7) Allow any buyer to be able to view the kittens with their mother, unless an exceptional and documented reason is provided.

A Standards Assessor will consult on this during an Assessment Visit. Kitten buyers are also asked for feedback.

7) Lifetime care

In order to be eligible for Scheme membership and to remain a Scheme Breeder, members must:

7.1) Commit to help, if necessary, with the re-homing of any cat that they provide within the Scheme, throughout the cat's lifetime, for whatever reason.

Kitten buyers are asked for feedback.

7.2) Euthanase cats and kittens only for health or welfare reasons, and on veterinary advice, where it is deemed that no reasonable alternative is available. Euthanasia must only be carried out under the direction of a Veterinary Surgeon.

Kittens that do not conform to aesthetic ideals and older cats formerly used as part of a breeding programme must not be euthanased other than for the reasons described above.

A Standards Assessor will consult on this during an Assessment Visit.

7.3) Provide suitable care for the number of cats in their ownership for the duration of their lifetime, including cats no longer required for breeding purposes. Ex-breeding cats must be neutered before being rehomed and before leaving the breeders premises. Sufficient carers and/or staff must be available to provide the levels of care outlined within this Standard.

A Standards Assessor will consult on this during an Assessment Visit.

This Standard, which includes all Scheme requirements and recommendations, is subject to improvements according to feedback and the need for the Scheme to develop. It is the responsibility of the Scheme Breeder to ensure that they understand these requirements, are aware of any changes and refer to the latest Standard available on the GCCF website.