

## Appendix A – The Questionnaire for Bat Care Network Members

### Part 1 – Overview

- Please select which one of these most applies to your position on the BCT Bat Care Network:
  - Bat carer.
  - Ambulance driver.
  - Wildlife hospital.
  - Veterinary practice.
  - Regional helpline (not linked to a bat group).
- What county are you based in?
- How long have you been caring for bats?
  - 1-5 years.
  - 5-10 years.
  - 10+ years.
- Do you train others in bat care? [Yes/No]
- How long have you been on the BCT UK Bat Care Network?
  - 1-5 years.
  - 5-10 years.
  - 10+ years.
- Are you a member of a local bat group? (If you work with multiple bat groups, please answer these questions in relation to the group you are most active with.)
  - No.
  - One group.
  - More than one group.
- **[If yes to being a member of a bat group]** What is the name of the bat group you are most active with?
- Are you also contributing to the bat group's response to this consultation? [Yes / No]
- **[If you are a member of your local bat group]** How does bat care operate within the bat group you are most active with? Please select all that apply:
  - The bat group operates a centralised system for bat care (a regional helpline, WhatsApp group, etc.).
  - Certain bat group members serve as carers and take bat care calls individually but are supported by bat group resources with training and recruitment organised through the bat group.

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- Certain bat group members serve as carers without direct support from the bat group.
- The bat group doesn't get involved with bat care or record which members are carers.
- Other.
- If you selected 'other' in answer to the previous question, please would you explain how bat care operates?
- If you regularly work with multiple bat groups, please name those groups and explain how operates within the bat group (using the list of options from the question above).
- What do you think works well with the way bat care operates currently within the group(s), and why does it work well?
- What do you think doesn't work well with the way bat care operates currently within the group(s), and why doesn't it work well?
- Do you already take calls from the public without them having come through the BCT Helpline (that you know of)? [Yes / No]
- **[If yes]** How have the members of public got your phone number/contact details?
- **[If yes to already taking calls from members of the public]** What are your experiences of dealing directly with members of the public (e.g. people are generally understanding of your role as a volunteer, people can be very demanding, people treat you with respect etc.?)

## **Part 2 – Option 1. Volunteer Bat Care Helpline**

We have been piloting the approach to handling of bat care calls where members of the public call the BCT Helpline number and, through a menu of options, all calls relating to bat care are diverted to volunteer call handlers. The volunteers have attended a training course and are supported by BCT back-up staff. In office hours (IOH, 9:30am-1pm & 1pm-4:30pm) the volunteers only answer bat care calls. Out of office hours (OOH, 6-10pm weeknights, 10am-2pm, 2pm-6pm & 6pm-10pm on weekends mid-May to mid-September) they also handle calls relating to bat crime cases (as has been the case with the OOH service for many years). The combined service is called the Volunteer Bat Care Helpline (VBCH). We are continuing to trial this option (IOH only) through the winter.

Currently, volunteers self-assign to VBCH shifts in advance. The target number of volunteers per shift is calculated based on average bat care call volumes since 2016 and is designed to make shifts manageable for volunteers. For example, in July, four volunteers are required per IOH shift, and two per OOH shift to cover approximately 60 cases per day. In December however, we need only one volunteer per IOH shift to cover an average of 5 calls per day. Meeting target volunteer coverage has been a challenge. For example, six IOH and 14 OOH shifts were closed entirely between May-September due to a lack of available volunteers, and 43% of IOH shifts July-August had only one

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volunteer available. However, we have amended recruitment targets and are trialling new volunteer engagement and retention activities. As a result coverage for IOH over winter is looking much better.

- We would like your feedback on how well you believe the VBCH pilot has worked this year. Please state whether your comments relate to your direct experience with finders or comments made by others.
- Are there any other comments that you wish to make about the option of continuing with the VBCH?

### Part 3 – Option 2. Regional/Bat Group Helplines

A number of local and regional helplines already exist in parts of the UK, whereby bat groups and/or carers collaborate to take bat care calls directly. Currently, some operate in parallel with the BCT Helpline while some operate through the Helpline, taking calls referred to them by BCT. This option would remove the role of the BCT Helpline and instead calls would go directly to the network of local and regional helplines across the UK to which bat finders would be directed (for example via the BCT website). Local and regional helplines would be responsible for receiving all bat care calls at a central number, advising bat finders as appropriate, delegating calls to the nearest carer, and ensuring health & safety protocols are followed. If no regional helpline was present in an area, finders would be directed to take bats to vets instead (support is available to vets via the BCT website). More information about the National Bat Helpline's current bat care call handling procedure can be found on the Bat Care Network pages on the BCT website.

- Do you currently have a regional/bat group helpline in operation in your area? [Yes / No / Don't know]
- **[If yes]** Would you consider providing advice and/or support to new local or regional helplines being set up?
- **[If yes to the first question]** Would you consider working with neighbouring bat groups to set-up a regional helpline covering a larger area? [Yes/No]
- **[If no to the first question]** If you used to have a regional/bat group helpline and it ceased operating, please can you explain why?
- What do you see as the advantages of a regional/bat group helpline?
- What do you see as the disadvantages of a regional/bat group helpline?
- If you are a bat carer or ambulance driver that works independently from a bat group, would you be prepared to work with a regional/bat group helpline, allowing them to direct calls to you? [Yes / No / Maybe]
- **[If no to the first question]** Would you consider running a regional/bat group helpline and/or co-operating with other bat groups and/or carers to run a regional helpline? [Yes / No / Maybe]

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- [If yes / maybe to consider running a helpline] Which other bat groups would you cooperate with?
- [If yes / maybe to consider running a helpline] What would you want to see in terms of support from BCT in setting up and/or maintaining your regional/bat group helpline?
- [If yes / maybe to consider running a helpline] What would you want to see in terms of peer support from fellow volunteer helplines, for example in the sharing of experiences and knowledge?
- [If yes to consider running a helpline] Would you be willing to take on responsibility for enforcing best practice (including vaccination status checks for those regularly handling bats), as regional helplines on the Bat Care Network currently do? [Yes / No]
- [If yes to consider running a helpline] Which of the following routes would you want to use to let the public know about your regional/bat group helpline? Tick all that would apply:
  - BCT website.
  - Bat group's own website.
  - HelpWildlife.co.uk or similar third-party websites.
  - Other.
- [If you selected other] Please expand on the other routes you would want to use:
- [If yes to consider running a helpline] What, if any, concerns do you have about making your regional/bat group helpline details publicly available?
- Are there any other comments that you wish to make about bat care calls being taken entirely by regional/bat group helplines rather than BCT?

#### **Part 4 – Option 3. Bat Finder Details Passed Direct to Carers**

This option makes use of a website and/or a smartphone app and each UK Bat Care Network member would have their own account. The details of how exactly this would work is dependent on the results of this consultation and the software capabilities. For example:

1. The bat finder's details are input into an online system (either directly on BCT's website where guidance about rabies and properly containing bats can be found, or by a volunteer call handler who will explain this advice).
2. When a bat needs help in a member's area, they all carers for whom the bat is within their working radius receive an alert with full details, for example in the app, by e-mail or by text.
3. A carer or ambulance driver would accept the case using the software.

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4. Once a Network member has accepted a care call, the others get a message advising they're no longer needed.

5. If no carer accepts a call within two hours for emergencies (we currently use the 'PIPS' acronym to determine emergency calls: Predated, Injured (in a way obvious to the finder), Pup, and Stuck to something.) or five hours for non-emergencies, the finder will be advised to take the bat to a vet.

6. Carers would manage their accounts independently and change their availability, radius, or personal details at any time themselves. Carers would receive rabies vaccination reminders automatically.

- Would you be comfortable using an online system or app to receive requests from members of the public? (The finder would not be given your contact details in this scenario. Only their details would be provided to you via the website/app.) [Yes / No]
- Are there any barriers to you using an online system or app? [Yes/No]
- **[If yes]** What are the barriers to you using an online system or app? (Please select all that apply)
  - Lack of Internet connectivity or mobile signal.
  - Lack of up-to-date computer or phone.
  - Disability that makes using technology difficult.
  - Dislike of / disagreement with online systems.
  - Other.
- **[If you selected 'Disability that makes using technology difficult.' in answer to the previous question]** Please let us know if there are any adjustments that could be made to make an online system or app usable.
- **[If you selected 'Other' in answer to the barriers question]** Please would you briefly explain the other barrier to using an online system or app?
- We would provide instructions in the use of the online system or app. What other support or training might you require?
- What sort of interface would you be happy to use? (Choose all that apply)
  - Smartphone app.
  - Tablet app.
  - Web-based system.
- How would you like to receive notifications of bats in your area? (Choose all that apply)
  - Text.
  - Email.
  - Within-app notification.

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- What controls would you want over your availability and preferences in an online system where finder details were passed to you? (Choose all that apply)
  - Setting your own availability.
  - Changing your radius.
  - Stating bats need to be brought to you, rather than collecting.
  - Stating you are able/unable to care for pups.
  - Maximum number of calls referred to me per day/week.
  - Other.
- [If you selected 'Other' in answer to the previous question] Please explain the other additional controls you would want.
- What do you see as the advantages of a system whereby bat finders' details are passed directly to carers via an online system or app?
- What do you see as the disadvantages of a system whereby bat finders' details are passed directly to carers via an online system or app?
- What sort of information and/or checks would you need for bat finders to have seen/understood before their details get passed on to you (e.g. containment advice, bat already contained, etc.)?
- In a system where finders details are passed to you, during what hours would you wish to be able to receive notifications from the finders?
  - Have option of setting own 'Do Not Disturb' period.
  - 8am to 8pm.
  - 9.30am to 10pm.
  - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
  - Other.
- [If you selected 'Other' in answer to the previous question] Please explain what the other hours are that you would wish to be able to receive notifications from bat finders?
- Do you have access to good internet service in your area? [Yes / No]
- Do you have access to good mobile service in your area? [Yes / No]
- Are there any other comments that you wish to make about bat finders' contact details being passed directly to carers rather than via BCT?

#### **Part 5 – Option 4. Carer Details Made Available Direct to Bat Finders**

This would operate on a similar basis to Option 3. except that instead of the bat finder's details being passed to carers and ambulance drivers, the details of local carers and ambulance drivers would be passed to the bat finder. Again, the details of how exactly this

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would work is dependent on the results of this consultation and the software capabilities.  
For example:

1. Bat finders use an online system, most likely hosted on the BCT website, to input their details and the location of the bat.
2. Here, they will find the contact details of up to three nearby carers/ambulance drivers, possibly based on postcode (as the Helpline currently does with bat care calls), grid reference, or some other method.
3. The bat finder will then contact the carers in list order (as they currently do when Helpline volunteers take bat care calls).
4. The bat finder will be advised that when there are no contact details available, or if no carer accepts a call within two hours for emergencies (we currently use the 'PIPS' acronym to determine emergency calls: Predated, Injured (in a way obvious to the finder), Pup, and Stuck to something.) or five hours for non-emergencies, the finder will be advised to take the bat to a vet.
5. Carers would manage their accounts independently and change their availability, radius or personal details at any time themselves. Carers would receive rabies vaccination reminders automatically.

- Would you be comfortable with your phone number/contact details being passed to bat finders via an online system or app? [Yes / No]
- **[If yes]** What controls would you want over your availability and preferences in an online system where your details were passed to finders? (Choose all that apply)
  - Setting your own availability.
  - Changing your radius.
  - Stating bats need to be brought to you, rather than collecting.
  - Stating you are able/unable to care for pups.
  - Maximum number of calls referred to me per day/week.
  - Other.
- **[If you selected 'Other' in answer to the previous question]** Please explain the other additional controls you would want.
- What do you see as the advantages of a system whereby carers' and ambulance drivers' contact details are passed directly to bat finders via an online system or app?
- What do you see as the disadvantages of a system whereby carers' and ambulance drivers' contact details are passed directly to bat finders via an online system or app?
- What sort of information and/or checks would you need for bat finders to have seen/understood before your phone number/contact details get passed on to them

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(e.g. containment advice, bat already contained, rabies advice, voluntary nature of the service, etc.)?

- In a system where your details are passed to finders, during what hours would you wish to be able to receive notifications from the finders?
  - Have option of setting own 'Do Not Disturb' period.
  - 8am to 8pm.
  - 9.30am to 10pm.
  - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
  - Other.
- **[If you selected 'Other' in answer to the previous question]** Please explain what the other hours are that you would wish to be able to receive notifications from bat finders?
- Are there any other comments that you wish to make about carers and ambulance drivers contact details being passed directly to members of the public via an online system or app?

#### **Part 6 – UK Bat Care Network Support**

Irrespective of what happens in terms of the four options covered by this consultation, we would like some feedback on the resources and support that BCT currently provides for members of the UK Bat Care Network. Whilst we cannot promise that we will be able to act on all suggestions and ideas for further support, we would appreciate your comments.

- Have you sought support from BCT on bat care related matters, such as disease risk management guidance, bat care questions, vaccinations? [Yes / No]
- **[If you answered yes to the previous question]** Please would you elaborate on the support you required.
- **[If you answered yes to the first question]** How did you access that support, e.g. was it via the BCT website, an email to the Bat Care Coordinator, phone call to the Helpline, etc.?
- **[If you answered yes to the first question]** How helpful did you find the support provided? Please select one of the following options:
  - Extremely helpful.
  - Very helpful.
  - Somewhat helpful.
  - Slightly helpful.
  - Not helpful.
- **[If you found the support helpful]** Please expand on your response to the question above, explaining why you found the support helpful.

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- **[If you didn't find the support helpful]** Please expand on your response to the question above, explaining why you didn't find the support helpful.
- How helpful are you finding the resources and communications provided by BCT for bat carers and ambulance drivers (including the Bat Care Network resources and recruitment sections of the website, Bat Care Bulletin blog, occasional supplementary mailings, and responses to queries). Please select one of the following options:
  - Extremely helpful.
  - Very helpful.
  - Somewhat helpful.
  - Slightly helpful.
  - Not helpful.
- **[If you found the resources helpful]** Please expand on your response to the question above, explaining what you find helpful about the resources and communications.
- **[If you didn't find the resources helpful]** Please expand on your response to the question above, explaining why you don't find the resources and communications helpful.
- Do you read the Bat Care Bulletin Blog? [Yes / No]
- **[If yes]** How soon after you are notified of a new blog item do you typically read it? Please select one of the following options:
  - Within an hour.
  - Within a day.
  - Within a week.
  - Within a month.
  - Longer than a month.
- **[If no to reading the Blog]** Why don't you read the blog?
- How often do you typically access the bat care resources on the BCT website? Please select one of the following options:
  - Daily.
  - Weekly.
  - Monthly.
  - Less often than monthly.
  - I have never accessed the bat care resources on the BCT website.
- Are there other bat care resources that you would like to see provided? [Yes / No]
- **[If yes]** Please explain what other bat care resources you would like to see provided.
- Are you a member of the Facebook Bat Rehabilitators Group? [Yes / No]

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- Do you receive the Bat Care News from the West Yorkshire Bat Hospital? [Yes / No]
- Do you have a copy of Maggie and Bryan Brown's Bat Care Manual or access to a copy (e.g. through your bat group)? Please select one of the following options:
  - Yes, I have my own copy.
  - Yes, I have access to someone else's copy.
  - No, I don't have access to a copy.
- Do you have a copy of BCT's Bat Care Guidelines? [Yes / No]
- **[If you do have a copy of BCT's Bat Care Guidelines]** How often do you refer to the guidelines? Please select one of the following options:
  - Whenever I care for a bat.
  - When I have a tricky case.
  - Occasionally to refresh my memory.
  - I have never referred to the Bat Care Guidelines.
- Any there any other sources of support that you use, if so please list them?
- Are there any other comments that you wish to make about the BCT UK Bat Care Network?

### Part 7 – Closing Questions

Thank you for working through the questionnaire. We have a few remaining questions and the opportunity for you to add any other comments that have not been covered elsewhere in the questionnaire.

Firstly we would like you to rank the four options for the handling of bat care calls in order of preference. Please only use each ranking once (i.e. only have one first choice, one second choice, etc.)

- Volunteer call handlers covering both out of hours and in office hours, supported by BCT staff.
  - First choice.
  - Second choice.
  - Third choice.
  - Fourth choice.
- Regional/bat groups helplines take bat care calls instead of the BCT Helpline.
  - First choice.
  - Second choice.
  - Third choice.
  - Fourth choice.

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- Bat finders' details get passed direct to carers via an online system or app.
  - First choice.
  - Second choice.
  - Third choice.
  - Fourth choice.
- Carer numbers made available direct to bat finders via an online system or app.
  - First choice.
  - Second choice.
  - Third choice.
  - Fourth choice.
- How would you feel if Option 1., the Volunteer Bat Care Helpline, remains in place to take bat care calls?
  - Happy.
  - Somewhat happy.
  - Somewhat unhappy.
  - Not happy.
- How would you feel if Option 2., where regional/bat group helplines take all bat care calls instead of the BCT Helpline, is implemented?
  - Happy.
  - Somewhat happy.
  - Somewhat unhappy.
  - Not happy.
- How would you feel if Option 3., bat finder contact details get passed direct to carers via an online system, is implemented?
  - Happy.
  - Somewhat happy.
  - Somewhat unhappy.
  - Not happy.
- How would you feel if Option 4., carer contact numbers are made available direct to bat finders via an online system, is implemented?
  - Happy.
  - Somewhat happy.
  - Somewhat unhappy.
  - Not happy.

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- Are there any of the options described that would prevent you working with BCT on bat care?
- Are there any other comments you would like to make that haven't been covered elsewhere in the questionnaire?
- Thank you for your time in completing the questionnaire and for your submission. If you wish to be sent a copy of the final report directly, please enter your name and email address (we will send communications to the members of the UK Bat Care Network and to bat groups when the report is available, and it will be shared on the BCT website). Please note your email address will not be kept with your questionnaire response and will only be used to send you the report when published.