



The National Bat Helpline's bat care call handling procedure

This information is for individual members of the UK Bat Care Network.

1. National Bat Helpline staff and volunteers will give your preferred contact details (along with the details of up to two other Network members in the area) to people who have found grounded or injured bats within your preferred radius of travel.
2. You are not obliged to assist with any particular call, and you may change the area you cover at any time. However, we will assume you are available to take calls unless you have told us otherwise in advance.
3. Prior to giving your number, we will talk the finder through containing the bat in a box with a tea towel and a small amount of water in a milk bottle lid. We will not give your number if the finder is unable or unwilling to contain the bat.
4. We will emphasise to all callers that you are a volunteer and that you do not work for the Bat Conservation Trust. We will explain that you have other commitments and may not be able to help.
5. We will advise all bat finders that if Network members are unable to help, or if they do not hear back from a Network member within a stated period, they should take the bat to a local vet. The waiting time advised before going to a vet will be five hours for a non-urgent case, or two hours for a cat attack, a pup separated from its mother, or a bat with visible severe injuries.
6. Call handlers will only advise that a finder try to release a bat if night-time temperatures are above 10° C and if the bat has recently been seen flying strongly, has not been caught by a cat and does not have any obvious injuries/symptoms that could affect its survival. In all other cases, the decision of whether or when to release a bat will be left for a carer to make.
7. All pups will be referred urgently to carers. We will leave it to carers to decide whether and how to try to reunite a pup with its mother.
8. We will inform all callers about the small but significant risk of rabies from bats in the UK and will advise them they should wear gloves if they need to handle a bat. Anyone who has been bitten or scratched by a bat (regardless of species or whether it broke the skin) will be advised to seek urgent medical advice and to inform the Animal and Plant Health Agency.