



## 2. Medical screening and behaviour monitoring of the cats

### Medical screening

- External veterinarian:
  - Preferably, a medical examination is carried out twice per year by a veterinarian who can evaluate both the physical and mental health of the cats.
  - The cats must be micro-chipped and have a registered passport (Ophorst, 2014).
  - The standard vaccinations must be given as advised by the veterinarian.
  - Upon the start of the project faecal screening for all types of parasites and bacteria is recommended.
  
- The permanent caregiver for the cats at the care facility:
  - must deworm the cats three to four times per year. Deworming one extra time is recommended when working with a sensitive target group.
  - must ensure the cats are treated with the standard anti-flea, anti-tick and anti-parasite products recommended by the veterinarian. When using these products, waiting 24 hours before interacting with patients is recommended.
  - monitors the health of the cats on a daily basis. If in doubt whether the cats are suitable to participate in AAI at that moment, it is recommended to contact the veterinarian (Ophorst et al., 2014).
  - keeps a record of the health of the cats (previous zoonoses, health problems, etc.) (Khan & Farrag, 2000).
  - If one cat shows symptoms of illness such as diarrhoea, vomiting, coughing or sneezing, it is recommended to separate this animal from the other cats and to temporarily isolate it in familiar surroundings. Keep an extra eye on the other cats.
  - Not until one week after the last symptoms of illness or after complete healing of a wound can the cat be reintroduced to the other cat(s) and be allowed to participate in AAI (Lefebvre et al., 2008).

### Behaviour monitoring

- External cat behaviour specialist:
  - A cat behaviour specialist has carried out a behaviour assessment of the cats (e.g. Delta Society Evaluation Procedure) (Lefebvre et al., 2008).
  - Preference should be given to the temperament and natural reactions of the cats. Obeying basic cues is secondary.
  - Preferably, the behaviour of the cats should be assessed every 6 months or sooner if problems arise (Lefebvre et al., 2008).
  
- The permanent caregiver of the cats at the care facility:
  - monitors the behaviour of the cats on a daily basis.
  - The reactions of the cats must be predictable, friendly, reliable and without any signs of aggression whatsoever.
  - Ideally, this person records the impact the AAI sessions have on the cats (Fine et al., 2013).