



## **Pets Policy**

**Revised April 2013**

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# Pets

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The sample policy below has been written specifically for a home where pets are encouraged. For a home which does not allow pets, a simple statement to that effect should be written into the Statement of Purpose and the Service Users Guide. The sample policy can be modified or used in part by homes adopting an intermediate position, for example having communal pets but not allowing residents' own pets.

Care home name: Wellbeing Residential

## Policy Statement

Wellbeing Residential believe that service users should be able to live their lives as closely as possible to the way they would choose if they were living independently and that many residents place a high value on contact with their own or other people's pets. We recognise, however, that other residents may be uncomfortable with living creatures in their immediate environment and that for some people close contact with certain animals may even be injurious to their health and comfort.

## Aim of the Policy

This policy aims as far as possible to balance possibly conflicting interests in relation to pets and to make clear the home's practice so that prospective residents can make an informed choice when deciding whether or not to come into the home.

## Policy on Pets

### 1. Pets and residents' individuality

We try as far as possible to implement the requirement in the National Minimum Standard on Autonomy and Choice that service users should be entitled to bring personal possessions with them, and we recognise that in some circumstances it is wise to see pets in this light.

We know that for many older people a pet, or at least contact with an animal, represents a source of deep emotional satisfaction.

As part of the pre-admission needs assessment of every prospective resident, we will explore feelings about pets in the course of recording their interests, hobbies, social contacts and relationships.

### 2. Accommodating residents' pets

If a prospective resident owns a pet and does not want to be parted from it, we will consider whether we can accommodate the pet. Issues to be taken into consideration will include:

- a. whether the service user will be personally able to take care of the pet
- b. whether the pet can generally be accommodated in the resident's own room
- c. whether there are other pets in the home at that time
- d. whether the presence of the pet in the home is likely to impact on other residents
- e. how other residents are likely to react to the pet.

If a pet cannot be accommodated, we will advise the prospective resident on the alternative arrangements which might be made for the pet's welfare.

### 3. The residents' responsibilities

A resident, who has a pet in the home, will be expected to:

- a. accept full responsibility for the pet's exercise, welfare and cleanliness, although limited involvement of staff in the care of the pet may be considered in the context of the resident's care plan

- b. meet all veterinary expenses
- c. make appropriate arrangements in consultation with staff for storing anything the pet may need
- d. keep the pet generally in their own room, unless other arrangements have been specifically agreed
- e. take responsibility for the pet's behavior if it has been agreed that the pet may enter communal areas
- f. ensure, as far as possible, that the pet does not distress other residents
- g. Accept responsibility for any damage or injury caused by the pet, including making appropriate insurance arrangements.

If a resident with a pet becomes unable to meet their responsibilities through disability or deteriorating health, we will:

- a. discuss alternative arrangements with the resident
- b. give every possible help in finding an alternative home for the pet.

If a resident's pet dies in the home we will:

- a. help the owner to deal with the feelings such a death provokes and with the tasks which follow
- b. provide assistance in replacing the pet if that is feasible
- c. be sensitive to the possible effects on other residents.

#### 4. **Pets belonging to the home**

With regards to pets belonging to the home, as opposed to those belonging to residents, we will:

- a. inform prospective residents of the situation and of our policy, accepting that some prospective residents may wish not to come into a home with pets
- b. ensure that specific staff are allocated responsibility for the care of the pets
- c. involve any resident who wishes to do so in the care of the home's pets
- d. use contact with pets as a positive aid to the welfare of residents who enjoy such contacts
- e. exclude pets from any areas of the home where their presence would constitute a health risk or from areas where it has been agreed should be pet-free
- f. try, as far as possible, to ensure that pets do not distress residents who find them uncongenial
- g. consult residents before disposing of an existing pet or introducing a new pet to the home.

#### 5. **Other contacts with animals**

We recognise that for some older people, contact with animals may be pleasurable or even therapeutic. If we do not have the capacity to provide such contacts within the home's own resources, we will:

- a. make arrangements for organized visits of animals to the home or for visits by residents to places where they can have contact with animals
- b. explore the therapeutic value of these contacts in order to maximize the benefits for individual residents
- c. Ensure that on such occasions there are alternative facilities available for residents who do not wish to have contact with animals.

## **Staff**

We accept that the presence of pets in Wellbeing Residential has implications for the working environment of staff and we will:

- a. inform prospective staff of the situation and of our policy
- b. allocate duties involving contact with pets only to staff who are happy to take them on
- c. provide appropriate training for staff in the care and positive use of pets
- d. Encourage all staff to read and be familiar with this policy.

Signed:

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Date:

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Policy review date:

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