



Policy Title	Domestic Pets	Date Implemented or Date of Last Review	04/20
Policy Reference	Pos Rel (Local 1)	Date of Next Review	04/21

Policy

The Placement recognises that there may be numerous benefits for Young people which are associated with having pets, including, for example:

- i) Love and companionship;
- ii) Reduced stress, alleviation of depression and loneliness;
- iii) Promotion of better health generally;
- iv) Opportunity for beneficial exercise.

Entering a Care Placement for the first time can be, and often is traumatic. Some new Young people have pets and unwanted separation from them can easily make the situation much more daunting. As such there may be opportunity for Young people who have them, to bring their (suitable) pet(s) with them upon admission, providing benefit to themselves and, potentially, to other Young people in the Placement.

Procedure

A suitable domestic pet, or pets

The question of what exactly is a suitable domestic pet has to be one of the first considerations for the Placement, as although it encourages Young people to bring their pet with them, there may be other factors which may lead to the concession being reasonably denied.

In view of this, no prospective Young person will be given permission to bring a pet or pets into the Placement unless the details have been assessed and approval has been given by a responsible person at a level equivalent to or higher than the Manager of the Placement.

Types of pets which may be suitable

The Placement does not wish to ban, absolutely, any particular pet, but for general guidance, the following may be considered suitable:

Turtles, rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters, gerbils, mice, birds, some dogs, cats and fish.

Larger animals, certain dog breeds, and/or those of particularly exotic species, which may be difficult to feed and maintain would generally be excluded.



Decisions will be taken on many aspects, but would generally revolve around the following considerations:

Q. Is the Placement a really suitable place for such a pet?

Q. Can the Young person look after the pet without any assistance, including feeding, exercising, cleaning up etc.

Q. If the Young person is unwell, can the pet be looked after adequately within current staffing levels? If not, are people nominated from outside who can take care of the pet for a while?

Q. Is the presence of the pet likely to be alarming to other Young people and/or staff?

Q. Are current Young people likely to suffer, e.g. through allergies?

Q. Can the pet be caged, and thus kept within the confines of the Young person's bedroom, for example?

Q. Is the pet behaviourally normal, or does it have tendencies, attitudes, anxieties etc which can result in acts of spontaneous and unprovoked aggression?

These considerations (and other relevant circumstances) will help determine whether the Placement is a suitable place, in which case permission will be given.

Also, the young person will be encouraged to write their own Risk Assessment and Care Plan for their pet (with their Key Worker's support) to present to the Management.

Care and attention

Generally speaking, and in relation to the Young person's age and capabilities, it will be for the Young person to look after the pet, to buy food for it, to feed it, to keep it clean, to exercise it when necessary and to ensure that it is not a nuisance to other Young people.

All costs associated with the care and maintenance of the pet are the responsibility of the Young person, as are costs for repair of any damage caused by the pet (unless alternative arrangements have been agreed).

The Placement accepts responsibility for looking after the pets of Young people on a temporary basis (for example whilst the Young person is unwell, or absent from the Placement), which would generally be for a period, on each occasion, of not longer than two consecutive weeks.

Vets bills

It will be the Young person's responsibility for the payment of Vets bills, unless some alternative arrangements have been made.

If the pet dies

If a Young person's pet dies, and the Young person requests that a replacement pet is obtained, then the Placement will normally agree to this provided that the usual rules apply regarding appropriateness, care etc. The new pet does not have to be of the same type.

The most appropriate means of disposal may be found for the deceased pet, which is unlikely to be burial, for example, within the garden or grounds of the placement. Staff



will act sensitively in this regard, and be particularly vigilant as to the Young person's emotional needs.

Details and Agreement

The Young person will be required to provide details of the pet, and (usually, according to age, understanding and capabilities) to enter into an Agreement with the Placement regarding its care.

Involvement of other Young people

The Placement will identify willing and responsible Young people within the Placement who will help monitor the effectiveness of this policy, and make recommendations, as necessary, in the light of experience and circumstances.

Young people will always be encouraged to help with other Young people's pets, especially in circumstances when a Young person may be temporarily incapacitated, and unable to look after their pet in the correct manner.

Visitors with pets

Although the Placement welcomes pets, for Young people, it feels that on balance, visitors are to be discouraged from bringing their pets into the Placement. There are numerous reasons for this, including hygiene, safety, allergic reactions etc, and such pets have not, of course, been considered under the Placement's comprehensive pre-entry review process.

In exceptional circumstances (for example the visitor may be bringing a pet previously owned by the Young person, and the emotional positives far outweigh any temporary, but controllable risks) permission may be given, but applications must be made to the Manager of the Placement prior to any visit.

This restriction does not apply to Visitors who have assistance dogs for their disabilities.

Signed by Cove Care

Lee Smith

Director

4/20