

41. Pets in the Home Policy and Procedure

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Purpose

- To guide management and placement staff in approval for a pet in the facility.
- To identify and articulate the expectations and responsibilities in pet ownership within the facility and contractual obligations.
- To ensure the welfare of staff, residents, and the pet.
- To outline the potential associated costs to the resident of pet ownership within the service.

Applicability

The procedures apply to:

- All residents and their decision makers who are considering or who are approved to bring in a pet. All service management and staff.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The AQCare has overall responsibility for ensuring that the procedures are managed appropriately at a site level in accordance with this policy.
- AQCare are responsible to ensure that this policy/agreement is in place and signed.
- The resident, with the support of the staff are responsible for the ensuring the day-to-day management of pets within the facility (including ensuring strategies are in place after hours and on weekends) and for ensuring the safety of residents, visitors, and staff.
- All staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with and ensuring that they comply with the procedures.
- Staff/residents are also responsible for informing AQCare of any known allergies that may affect them if they come into contact with pets in the workplace.
- Residents/their decision makers with the support of Lifestyle staff are responsible for the overall health and wellbeing of the pet.
- Residents/their decision makers are responsible for all costs associated with the pet, including the cost of food, vaccination and veterinary bills as directed by the service.
- Where the animal is causing concern to the health and safety of any staff, residents or visitors or causing damage or risk of damage to the service, at the discretion of AQCare

management, the resident/decision makers will be asked to find alternative accommodation and remove the pet at a cost to them.

- Where the resident exits the service on a temporary or permanent basis, the decision maker or delegate is responsible to alternatively accommodate the pet/find alternative ownership.
- The residents are liable for any damages caused by the pet at all times.

General Principals

- Wherever possible, AQCare will accommodate a resident's pet when they move into a facility. AQCare recognises that moving into a home can be a traumatic and distressing time for residents, their families and carers. This distress can be exacerbated where the client must part with their pet before moving in.
- At the assessment stage, when a facility is being considered, the discussion should include the subject of the prospective resident's pets.
- The outcome of this discussion must be recorded on the assessment forms including any action that will be taken (and by whom), to find out whether the pet can accompany the resident. This must be explored with the care home/s being considered.
- There is no guarantee that AQCare can continue to care for a resident's pet if the pet outlives their owner. The arrangements for managing this circumstance must be discussed and agreed with the resident/family/representatives as part of the admission process.
- In certain circumstances, AQCare could accommodate small household pets only. The home cannot accept large pets, exotic species, or animals requiring substantial support from care staff.
- There may be occasions where AQCare agrees that the home will take over the responsibility for caring for a resident's pet if they are no longer capable of doing so and the family/representative are not able to take this on.
- AQCare may agree with the resident/family/representative that the home is not able to take over responsibility and another home must be sought wherever possible in consultation with the family, and unless previously agreed, this cost will be borne by the resident/family.
- The health and well-being of residents and staff must take precedence when considering the accommodation of a pet – for example, if a resident/staff member is allergic to cat hair and the cat cannot be kept away from that person then the cat may not be able to be accommodated.
- The final decision regarding the accommodation of a resident's pet rests with AQCare as this may depend on the number and type of animals already resident in the home, and the type and behaviour of the proposed pet.
- The resident and/or family/representative must be consulted throughout the decision-making process and, if the decision is that the pet cannot be accommodated, must be provided with the reasons for that decision to enable them to decide whether they wish to move into the home.

- Before accepting a pet into the home, AQCare must satisfy themselves that all necessary risk assessments and consultations with relevant/directly affected existing residents and staff have been undertaken.
- AQCare must also be satisfied that the arrangements for the care and management of the pet are in place and that the resident/family/representative fully understand their responsibilities in this regard – particularly that they are responsible for the costs of maintaining the pet.
- Once the decision has been taken that the home will accommodate a resident's pet then the preference is for the pet to remain in the resident's room as long as this does not affect the home's ability to provide care to the resident.
- When the pet dies the resident/family/representative is responsible for arranging the removal and disposal of the body.
- The situation must be kept under regular review to ensure that the continued accommodation of the pet is appropriate. This is particularly important when a pet becomes ill or requires specialist care that cannot be provided in the care home.

Procedures

- Each care home must draw up an agreement with the resident/family/representative as to how the pet will be cared for using the 'Guidelines for the Care of a Pet in a Care Home'. The guidelines identify the areas that must be discussed and recorded on a suitable document.
- The arrangements, once agreed, must be shared with relevant staff to ensure that they understand its contents and what they are responsible for.
- Any staff member who has a concern regarding the well-being of the pet must report this to AQCare at the earliest opportunity so that appropriate action can be taken.
- When the pet becomes ill, the resident/family/representative should be informed so that appropriate action can be taken.
- The agreement will be reviewed and re-signed as needs change, but in any case, each year.

Guidelines for the Care of a Pet in a Care Home

AQCare should obtain the following information from resident/family/representative regarding the pet:

- Feeding routine
- Sleeping habits
- Other known behaviours/habits
- Veterinary checks
- History of worming and flea prevention procedures

- What is to happen to pet if it dies
- What is to happen to pet if owner dies first
- What is to happen if the owner moves from the home on a permanent basis.

Discussion with the resident/family/representative to include:

- Understanding and agreeing that the pet may have to be removed from the home if it has a negative impact on other services users or staff.
- Acknowledgement that AQCare has final say regarding the accommodation of the pet.
- That the owner of the pet either subscribes to an Insurance Scheme which ensures payment of veterinary fees or that they pay for all costs associated with the care of the pet.
- Any cost incurred by the home as a result of damage caused by the pet should be met by the resident or relatives. Provision of food and other items such as lead, bedding, litter tray and regular supply of litter, or sanded sheets for caged birds etc.
- Ideally dogs or cats should be neutered before coming into the home.
- Agreement from other affected residents.
- All cost implications of maintaining the pet and that these must be met by the resident/family or representative.
- All transport to and from the vet for treatment will be undertaken by the family/representative.
- Circumstances where the resident is unable to fully understand this agreement the family/representative must agree to take full responsibility in abiding by this agreement and acting on their behalf.

Related Documents

- AQCare – Pet Ownership Agreement

Acknowledgement and Agreement

By signing below, I acknowledge and agree to the above.

Resident's Name:		Signature:		Date:	
Guardian/Family Member:		Signature:		Date:	
Witness:		Signature:		Date:	
Care Manager:		Signature:		Date:	