

Checklist for care homes or residential care when creating a pet policy



Blue Cross understands that residents bringing their pet might not be suitable for all care homes or residents and if this is the case then this should be clearly indicated on publicity material and website.

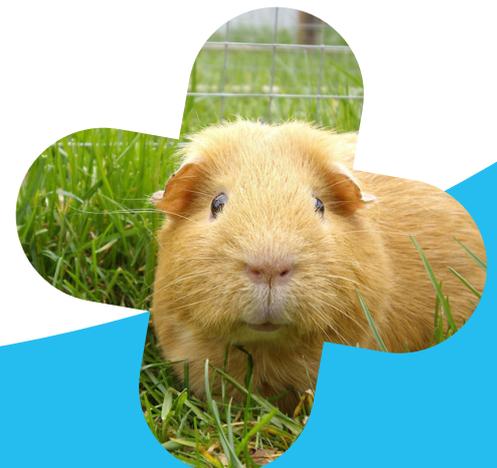
Animal Welfare Act 2006 – It is important that any pet in a care home or residential care is having its welfare needs under the Animal Welfare Act met. The Animal Welfare Act sets out the five freedoms which all pets must have and it is important that these are able to be met within a care home environment.

The five freedoms are:

- Suitable living environment
- Appropriate diet
- Ability to exhibit natural behaviours
- The need to be housed with or apart from other animals
- Protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease

Find out what type of pet the enquirer has and consider their welfare needs against all of the above. For guidance see the relevant Code of Practice:

- **England:**
gov.uk/guidance
- **Wales:**
gov.wales/topics
- **Scotland:**
gov.scot/Topics
- **Northern Ireland:**
daera-ni.gov.uk/publications



Is the pet owner well and able enough to care for the pet themselves?

Is the pet likely to outlive the owner or their ability to care for it? What measures could be in place for the pet's care if the owner became ill or could no longer take care of the pet eg an alternative home or carer on standby?

Is the pet well behaved and trained – is it house trained?

Have an open discussion with the owner of the pet about how the pet behaves on daily basis and its lifestyle requirements.

Are any other residents allergic to pets?

Could a pet be accommodated around this with certain conditions in place eg pet not allowed in communal areas of the home?

Take precautions against infection.

For example, make sure pets have regular flea and worming preventative treatment and see their vet for check-ups. Set up any other precautions as needed.

Discuss veterinary care with pet owner.

Things to consider are:

Is their vet is local? Can they get there? Does the vet do home visits? Ensuring veterinary costs can be covered by the owner?

If issues arise with the behaviour of the pet how will a solution be reached?

How would you handle complaints about pets? Have a process in place in case this comes up.

Have a risk assessment process for each pet before deciding if they are suitable to live in the home with their owner.

If a pet cannot live with the owner in the home can a charity or other organisation help them? For example Blue Cross may be able to rehome the pet if they decide this is the best option. Blue Cross also offer a Pet Bereavement Support Service to help owners cope if they decide to give up their pet.

Owners can register with the Blue Cross 'Pets into Care' scheme so that their pet will be cared for and rehomed if they outlive their owner.

Sick, injured and homeless pets have relied on us since 1897.

www.bluecross.org.uk

