



STANDING OPERATING PROCEDURE

Subject	Pets in Patients Homes SOP041
Applicable to	All Care Staff
Date issued	20 March 2024
Next review date	20 March 2025
Lead responsible for Policy	Director of Care
Policy written by	Governance Lead/Head of Community Services
Notified to	Policy Working Group (21 Feb 2024)
Authorised by	Senior Leadership Team (20 Mar 2024)
CQC Standard	
Links to other Policies/Procedures	
Summary	This SOP provides guidance to care staff on the implications of patients having pets in the homes that they visit and the procedures to minimise risk.
Target Audience	All Care Staff

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Staff should refer to the Hospice website for the most up to date Policy. If the review date of this document has passed it is still valid for 3 months. After that staff should seek advice from their clinical lead or manager.

1.	<p>Introduction</p> <p>This SOP provides guidance to care staff on the implications of patients having pets in the homes that they visit. The term pets can include dogs, cats, fish, birds, hamsters, exotic animals, etc., any animal that is a member of the patient's household.</p> <p>The care and control of any pet will remain the full responsibility of the patient or other members of their household.</p> <p>Hospice staff will not take part in any care of the pet.</p> <p>The Hospice recognises that patients will often have a strong attachment to their pets and there are clear benefits to them from this.</p> <p>The Hospice recognises that it has a duty of care for the health and safety of its staff and must not expose them to any risk to their personal safety, for example, from being bitten or scratched by unfriendly pets, from catching infections from going into unhygienic conditions caused by pets or their lack of proper care, from allergic reactions to certain animals or from anxiety states and phobias associated with certain types of animals.</p>
2.	<p>Assessment</p> <p>Information about household pets will be discussed in the pre-service assessment. The information gathered will be passed onto staff prior to the home visit.</p> <p>If there are pets in the house — which might or might not be the direct responsibility of the patient — the assessor will carry out a risk assessment based on three main implications of the fact of there being a pet or pets in the house. The assessment will determine if there are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health and safety risks of any kind to the visiting Hospice staff, e.g. from pet allergens or behaviour and the conditions under which they are being kept

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health and safety risks of any kind to the patient from the delivery of the proposed service because of the pet's or pets' presence, e.g. from the number of animals, risks of infection, the result of poor animal hygiene • risks to the health and wellbeing of the pet or pets because of any difficulties found in providing proper care to the pet, e.g. where there are clear signs of the pet being subject to neglect. <p>If pets are in the home but were not identified in the pre-assessment this should be recorded as soon as possible and a risk assessment completed.</p>
3.	<p>Actions following Risk Assessment</p> <p>In many cases, the assessed risks will be minimal or low in any of the above respects or they will be controlled by standard health and safety practice, such as using gloves, personal protective clothing and suitable materials for clearing up an occasional spillage or mess.</p> <p>In some cases, however, the risks could be sufficiently high to warrant stronger control measures, which will depend on the nature and level of the identified risks, but might involve, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a referral being made to an external agency such as environmental health or even the local safeguarding authority where the person is at risk from harm from their pets or the conditions under which they are kept • an agreed plan with the patient and/or their family to exclude the pet from the presence of the patient and hospice staff during service delivery • a referral being made to the RSPCA or local animal welfare organisation (Appendix 1) where there are concerns about the pet's care. <p>The Hospice recognises that risk assessment outcomes will vary from situation to situation. They will usually result in bespoke risk control measures being put into place following discussion with the parties involved and their consent being obtained to any proposed plans.</p>

	<p>The Hospice recognises any course of action must be taken with the patient's consent unless it can be shown that they lack the mental capacity to give their consent. The taking of what might appear to be an unwise decision is not necessarily evidence of lack of mental capacity. But where it is thought that a patient cannot give their valid consent or take their own decisions on the issues raised by their pets, Mental Capacity Act 2005 "best interests" assessments and decision-taking will be followed.</p> <p>The Hospice will always put the appropriate risk control measures in place and will make sure that no worker is exposed to an unacceptable risk or feels that they are being exposed to an unacceptable risk. It will always ascertain that visiting staff are comfortable with the pets kept by the households that they go into or are at the least accepting of them with the risk control measures put into place.</p>
4.	<p>Training</p> <p>Staff are briefed on the implications of having to visit homes where there might be pets as part of their induction training and the procedures above will be discussed with them.</p>

Animal Organisations

1. RSPCA
Notts West Branch (Mansfield) 01623 442 673
Notts East Branch (Newark) 01636 610 178
Nottingham and Notts Branch 0115 784 1110
2. Babworth Animal Resue Kennels (Retford) – rehoming
3. Bramcote Animal Resue 0115 922 0286
4. Brinsley Animal Rescue (pets and wildlife) 01773 712 999
5. Cats Protection Nutall 0115 938 6557
6. Cinnamon Trust (support EoL patients with pet care and planning for pet's future) 01736 757 900
7. Dogs Trust (re-homing centre) 0303 003 000
8. East Midlands Dog Rescue (25 mile radius of Enderby, Leicestershire)
0116 286 266/01455 845 701
9. Jerry Green Dog Rescue 01623 792 886
10. PDSA (vet care for sick and injured pets, financial support) 01159 785 787
11. Radcliffe Animal Centre (rehoming cats and dogs) 0115 855 0222