

Supporting people with pets who need to leave home urgently

A Guide for Social Workers

The Scottish Association of Social Work (SASW) have collaborated with Pet Fostering Service Scotland (PFSS) to raise awareness of PFSS services throughout Scotland.

Social workers frequently support people who need to leave their homes because they need to go into hospital for some time, become homeless or need to go into temporary accommodation where they cannot take their pets, for example, due to domestic abuse. Concerns about the care and welfare of a much-loved pet can delay decisions around health care or safety, and may cause high levels of stress for owners who are unable to care for their pet in the immediate to medium term future.

PFSS (a registered charity) are a third sector agency providing short term care for pets when their owner is unable to care for them due to illness, homelessness or domestic abuse. They are able to care for pets for up to a year, although three months is considered to be a realistic stay, depending on the reason for fostering. In all cases, the aim is to return the pet to their owner at the end of the fostering arrangement. It should be noted that PFSS are not a rehoming service.

Did you know?

PFSS foster over 200 pets every year-with 75% being dogs, 24% cats and 1% small furrries or birds. We have even fostered Koi fish and fancy rats on occasion.

How to access the pet fostering service



0344 811 9909 (open 9am - 7pm daily)



fosterenquiry@pfss.org.uk

PFSS have a dedicated low-cost phone number, 0344 811 9909, which can be called between 9.00am and 7.00pm daily. The pet owner will be asked to complete a Pet Foster Request Form and a PFSS Authorisation Form and provide a second signatory who could be a relative, friend or supporter who can assume responsibility for the pet should the owner be unable to resume care in the longer term. A call-back email request is also available via fosterenquiry@pfss.org.uk

Who can access pet fostering through PFSS



Ill health



Boarding for holidays



Homelessness



Short breaks



Domestic abuse



Those who can afford kennels etc

The service PFSS offer is available to anyone who is unable to care for their pet for a period of time due to ill health, homelessness, or where someone is unable to care for their pet due to domestic abuse. PFSS do not provide a boarding service for holidays or short breaks or for those who can afford kennels etc.

Is there any charge for the service



PFSS do not charge for fostering services

PFSS do not charge for fostering services. However, the owner is expected to pay for or provide food and to try to pay for any veterinary services needed during the fostering arrangement.

What type of pets can be cared for



Not just cats and dogs

The majority of animals cared for by PFSS volunteers are dogs and cats. However, volunteers have also cared for small furrries (rabbits, hamsters, gerbils) and in some cases fish, birds and reptiles.

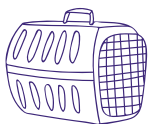
Who will look after the pet



Services provided by trained and vetted volunteers

Fostering services are provided by trained and vetted volunteers, the PFSS presently has around 300 volunteers who care for animals in their own homes, providing compassionate care to help them adjust to the move. Where possible pet fosterers can keep in touch with the owner about how their pet is doing in foster care.

How will I transport the pet to fostering



PFSS hope the owner will be able to transport their pet

Where possible it is hoped the owner will be able to transport their pet to fostering. However, if possible, help from the social worker is always appreciated for transport. Other options can also be discussed.

Ways for social workers to help

- PFSS need a contact name to ensure the fostering process can be completed quickly with minimal trauma for the pet and owner. Often fostering is finalised at weekends or at night and an out of hours contact is especially helpful.
- Keep the PFSS updated when social workers change cases or move role, so that the PFSS has up to date contact information for reuniting pet and owner.

PFSS has a comprehensive website which offers details of the service and the background of the charity. www.pfss.org.uk