

COMMUNITY LIVING DURHAM NORTH

PET POLICY

Policy No: B-26 (Service Delivery)

Effective Date: June 30, 2011

Last Revision/Review: July 26, 2016

Rationale:

To ensure that if pets or therapy animals are brought into a home, they enhance the lives of people and are in turn well cared for.

Policy Statement:

When pets are part of a household and when companion animals are used for therapy purposes, CLDN will strive to ensure that the arrangement or experience is enjoyable and safe for both people and animals. The use of animals in programs needs to have the consent of all people utilizing the program and must not impact negatively on the physical or mental health of any one of them. People who want a pet must understand and be supported to respond to the financial responsibilities, care needs and by-laws associated with having a pet.

In reference to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, this is not a “No Pets” policy and service animals are welcome in all of our public facilities.

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
For the Board of Directors

## COMMUNITY LIVING DURHAM NORTH

### PET POLICY

Procedure No: B-26-1

Effective Date: June 30, 2011

**Things to Consider before Acquiring  
a Pet**

Last Revision/Review: Sep 15/13

- A pet may be acquired by one person, or it might belong jointly to everyone living in the home. Regardless, acquiring a pet is a big decision involving everyone in the home, including staff, and it needs to be openly discussed and decided upon before the animal is brought into the house
- The following are the things that need to be discussed and/or determined:
  - The home must be assessed to ensure it can provide an abuse-free and safe environment for a pet.
  - Is everyone living in the home in favour of having a pet?
  - Are the people living in the home really in favour, or is it a staff initiative?
  - Can the supported person, or the several people in the home, afford to keep a pet?
  - Who in the home is willing to assume certain responsibilities (e.g. feeding, going for walks, cleaning cages or litter boxes)?
  - The things everyone needs to remember, like keeping doors closed, not over-feeding, following established routines, etc.
  - How to interact with the pet gently and with care.
- The cost sharing of pet care may seem to contradict the position that the agency has taken against group purchases made by people living together in group homes. However, the agency should not bear the cost of caring for pets, so cost-sharing may be the only feasible way for supported people to have one. Further, the group purchase of a thing is complicated in the sense that each person's financial interest in the article needs to be documented and then, when the make-up of the home changes, some commercial transaction needs to occur so that no one is disadvantaged.

A pet, on the other hand, is not a thing, and acquiring one is not an investment. A shared pet will not be traded in for its cash value to facilitate the dissolution of the partnership. Each person should be aware that if he leaves the home the shared pet will remain behind.

- Research and discuss the type of animal that all would want based on:

- The cost associated with certain pets (e.g. meeting nutritional and dietary needs, license, ongoing medications/immunizations, veterinarian checkups, cage, leash and other accessories).
- The living space required by different kinds of pets.
- The exercise and mental stimulation required by the pet.
- Attributes of various types of pet animals in relationship to what people are looking for in a pet companion.

Procedure No: B-26-2  
**Approval Process**

Effective Date: June 30, 2011

- Acquiring a pet requires the approval of not only the manager but of the entire team of senior staff. This is because the animal, if long-lived, will materially impact on the services that the agency can provide. Pets are not disposable. Therefore, once it is established in the home, it will potentially limit the range of people who can move into it.

Procedure No: B-26-3  
**Staff Responsibilities**

Effective Date: June 30, 2011

- The relative roles of supported people and staff will vary considerably. Ideally, in SIL, the role for staff would be minimal. In a group home, staff will likely have to play the dominant role and assume ultimate responsibility for the welfare of the animal. In either case, staff should instruct supported people in the following elements of caring for a pet, and must also model these behaviours:
  - The respectful treatment of the pet (i.e. in how it is touched, petted, groomed and in the tone and volume of voice used when it is spoken to).
  - Recognizing pet signals and signs of distress/illness, wanting to be fed, wanting attention, not wanting attention.
  - Proper use of treats and rewards, and of accessories such as leashes and toys.
- Through modeling and instruction, help people establish humane and consistent care routines. And, where necessary, ensure:
  - Proper feeding routines so that pets are not over or under fed, and so that nutritional needs are met consistently.
  - That exercise and stimulation needs are met.
  - That animals' living areas are kept clean and tidy.
  - That pet excrement is removed regularly (e.g. from lawns, kitty litter boxes or cages, as the case requires). Note, however, that pregnant women are not to clean kitty litter boxes.

- That regular (annual) and emergency veterinary visits occur, and that immunizations are up to date.
  - That the animal's living space is humane. If animals must be confined to a limited space, ensure that it is an area with lot of stimulation, fresh air and sunlight (e.g. a cage in or near a window for birds, rabbits, etc.). Cats or dogs should not be confined to a basement area.
  - That timely decisions are made on care needs during vacations (i.e. about boarding the animal, having someone come in to feed and interact with the animal, etc.).
  - That budgeting and shopping for pet supplies is undertaken, as required.
  - That a pet file or log is established that might contain a picture of the animal, veterinary schedules, proof of immunizations, feeding schedules, medication schedules, exercise schedules and grooming practices including clean up of pet hair, litter boxes, cages, aquariums, etc.
  - Pet immunizations are tracked in the AIMS Documentation Due tab.
- A review of this pet file/log and of the animal's care needs in general must be included in the site specific orientation that is provided to new staff and to staff new to the location.

Procedure No: <u>B-26-4</u> <b>Pet Therapy</b>	Effective Date: <u>June 30, 2011</u>
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- When it is not feasible for the home to have a pet, one or more of its residents may still want contact with animals. In this event, there are other options to consider:
  - Contact an established Pet Therapy service.
  - Volunteer as a dog walker (or establish a business as a dog walker).
  - Visit animals in other homes or at the Animal Shelter.
- A home that is considering contacting a therapy animal service needs to consider or attend to various things:
  - Managerial approval must be obtained and if there is a cost people must be in a position to pay it. Alternatively, a cost sharing arrangement with the agency could be requested, in advance.
  - Everyone in the home needs to consent to the visit, and no visit can occur if any one person has a pet allergy or is afraid of animals (although, in the latter case, it might be a satisfactory solution for the person to not be home when the visit occurs).
  - Be aware of people's skill level and reduce risk through education and instruction in how to interact with animals.

— Provide close supervision. At no point are people using services to be left alone with visiting pets.

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
CEO