

Pet Care Plan & Handover Sheet

Who looks after the animal now, who takes over at each stage, and what the next person needs to know.

DAY TO DAY DEMENTIA

Fill this in before you need it

The day an animal has to change hands is almost never a calm day. It is usually the day of a fall, a hospital admission, or a placement — and the decision gets made by whoever happens to be standing in the kitchen.

Keep this where somebody else can find it. A drawer in the kitchen beats a locked file.

The three moments to plan for

- **A hospital admission.** Sudden, short notice, and the most likely of the three. Somebody needs a key tonight.
- **A move into residential care.** Most memory care facilities will not take a resident's pet, so the animal needs a permanent home in the same week as the placement.
- **Death.** By which point the animal has usually already moved at least once.

A will is not enough on its own. It has no effect until it is admitted to probate, which takes months, and it does nothing at all while the owner is alive but no longer able to manage the animal. What works is a named person who has been asked and has said yes — plus a key, and money that can be reached now.

Three things people wish they had done sooner

- **Asked the person they had in mind,** rather than assuming.
- **Updated the microchip registration.** The most commonly forgotten step, and the one that matters if the animal is ever lost.
- **Left a key and some accessible money** with whoever is going to step in.

Free to print, copy, and share. Please pass it on to anyone who needs it.

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Peer support and education — not legal or veterinary advice. Pet trust rules vary by state.

The animal

NAME

AGE OR DATE OF BIRTH

MICROCHIP NUMBER

SPECIES / BREED

SPAYED / NEUTERED

REGISTERED TO — UPDATE THIS

Veterinary

PRACTICE

VACCINATIONS DUE

ONGOING CONDITIONS AND MEDICATION — NAME, DOSE, WHEN

PHONE

INSURANCE POLICY / NUMBER

What the next person needs to know

FRIGHTENED OF

GOOD WITH CHILDREN, OTHER ANIMALS, STRANGERS

ROUGHLY WHAT THE CARE COSTS EACH MONTH

COMMANDS THEY KNOW

Who takes over, and when

Name a real person for each stage, then **ask them**. An assumption is not a plan. Tick the box only once they have said yes.

NOW — DAY TO DAY	
FEEDING	WALKING
VET TRIPS	WHO PAYS

HOSPITAL ADMISSION — DAYS TO WEEKS, NO NOTICE	
PERSON AND PHONE NUMBER	DO THEY HAVE A KEY OR CODE?
☐ They have agreed to this.	

MOVE INTO CARE — MOST FACILITIES WILL NOT TAKE A PET	
PERSON TAKING THE ANIMAL PERMANENTLY, AND PHONE NUMBER	
BACKUP, IF THAT FALLS THROUGH	
☐ They have agreed. ☐ Visits arranged, so the animal stays in the owner's life.	

ON DEATH	
PERSON AND PHONE NUMBER	MONEY SET ASIDE, AND WHERE
☐ They have agreed. ☐ Written into the estate paperwork.	

If there is genuinely no one. Start with the breed rescue, then the shelter the animal came from — many will take an animal back for life. Ask about their policy before you need it, and say the animal is coming from a household affected by dementia. It changes how they place them.

The routine

The part that lives entirely in one person's head. Write it down while that person is you.

MORNING — WHAT HAPPENS, AND WHEN

FOOD — WHAT, HOW MUCH, HOW MANY TIMES A DAY

EVENING AND OVERNIGHT — WHERE DO THEY SLEEP

WALKS — HOW FAR, HOW OFTEN, ON OR OFF THE LEASH

WHAT CALMS THEM

IF THEY WILL NOT EAT, OR SEEM UNWELL

ANYTHING ELSE THE NEXT PERSON WOULD ONLY LEARN THE HARD WAY

If the animal is being fed several times because the owner cannot remember doing it — portion the whole day into labeled containers each morning, or move feeding to a time somebody else is there. Correcting the person does not work, because they are not doing anything wrong that they can recall. A badly overweight pet is a common and preventable outcome.

When the animal moves, send the bedding unwashed. Familiar smell settles an animal faster than anything else on this page. Expect a couple of unsettled weeks; it is not a sign the new home is wrong.

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