*[Insert organisation logo]*

***Date MM/YYYY***

*This guidance has been developed by Together Through Homelessness to support services delivering outreach or floating support. It is intended as a template that can be personalised to reflect your organisation’s specific approach, while maintaining consistent principles and framework across the sector.*

***Please do not edit or change any part of this document unless the text appears in blue italics****. These sections are intentionally left open for you to tailor to your service.*

***By using this template, you agree to respect these usage guidelines.***

***Guidance for homelessness organisations providing an [Outreach/Floating Support] service.***

An *Outreach/Floating Support* service understands the challenges that come with dog ownership whilst experiencing *[street]* homelessness. Their support enables service users to receive a wide range of help and information in non-conventional surroundings i.e. on the street or in other locations. This guidance is for *Outreach/Floating Support* staff supporting dog owners and covers the legal obligations of dog ownership, animal welfare, health and safety and signposting. Using this guidance alongside the **Dog Policy, Outreach Process Flow Chart and the Dog Friendly Outreach Toolkit training videos** will help dog owners to feel comfortable during a *visit/external meeting* and for staff members to feel confident engaging with dog owners in varied locations.

The following information can be provided to the people you support about the expectations of dog ownership whilst *[experiencing street homelessness/living in temporary accommodation].*

**Legal obligations of dog ownership**

Dog owners are responsible for the care and wellbeing of their dog by complying with the Animal Welfare Act 2006. This includes feeding and ensuring water is available daily, exercising the dog and addressing any health needs, including veterinary care.

A dog must be microchipped and registered to their owner to comply with the law. The dog’s microchip record must be kept up to date. Microchipping and updating the microchip record is available through our Vet Scheme free of charge. It is also a legal requirement for a dog to have an ID tag (including the owner’s name, c/o address and contact number).

Dog owners are responsible for controlling their dog at all times. It is a criminal offence (under Control of Dogs Order 1992) to allow a dog to frighten or injure a person in a public or private place. Any dog owners who regularly allow their dogs to cause a nuisance, disturb or frighten other people, team members or members of the public may not be able to continue receiving support from the service. If a dog owner fails to prevent their dog from biting people or other dogs, they will be reported to the police.

Dangerous Dogs Act 1991– Some breeds are banned unless exempted. While it’s not your job to identify these, it’s important to know that someone who is street homeless may be more at risk of having their dog seized without a registered address.

Dog owners are responsible for cleaning up after their dog under the Public Space Protection Order. They should bag and bin all dog waste and may be fined up to £1000 if they do not clean up after a dog in public places. Dogs Trust can provide poo bags free of charge.

Please be aware there may be local bylaws affecting dog owners in your area.

**Health and Welfare**

Team members will **not tolerate** refusal from dog owners to care for their dogs properly and in clear cases of neglect or maltreatment, they will inform the RSPCA and police, and appropriate action will then be taken by these authorities. The dog owner may also face prosecution.

Dog owners should ensure that they can access veterinary treatment for their dog whenever needed – this includes in an emergency situation. Registration to Dogs Trust’s Vet Scheme provides free essential and emergency veterinary treatment at a local partner vet practice.

**Neutering** – To access the Together Through Homelessness Vet Scheme, a dog must be neutered within 12 months. Exceptions will only be made on the recommendation of a veterinary surgeon. Team members can help with accessing further information about the benefits of getting a dog neutered.

**Health check** – Dogs should have a health check, be regularly treated for fleas and worms and kept up-to-date with their annual booster vaccination. The Together Through Homelessness Vet Scheme can support with this.

**Gathering information**

When meeting a dog owner for the first time, recording basic information about the dog, its temperament and behaviour via the referral form template provided by Dogs Trust will help you understand more about the dog and any associated risks. The Dog Policy, alongside a risk assessment for each dog owner you support, will help the service introduce effective measures to keep the risk of accident or injury low.

**Emergency Carer**

If possible, request details of someone who can act as an emergency carer in case of unexpected situations arising i.e. medical incident/hospital stay/arrest/ custodial sentence. If the owner is unable to provide these details, staff would need to contact to the local dog warden.

**Sub-agreement: Named people to look after the dog:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| First named person |   |
| Contact number(s) |   |
| Signature |   | Date |   |
| Team member signature  |   | Date  |   |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Second named person:  |   |
| Contact number(s): |   |
| Signature |   | Date |   |
| Team member signature  |   | Date  |   |

**Emergency contact:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name  |   |
| Relationship to dog owner  |   |
| Address |   |
| Telephone  |   | Mobile no.  |   |
| Email  |   |

**Veterinary details:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Vet name  |   |
| Address  |   |
| Telephone  |   |
| Email  |   |
| **Vet Scheme**  | Vet card no. | Expiry date |

*This is a guide for information only and does not constitute legal or veterinary advice from Dogs Trust. For legal or veterinary advice, you must consult an independent lawyer or veterinary surgeon.*

**For further information and advice, please contact Together Through Homelessness directly by calling 020 7833 7688 or emailing** **tth.endorsement@dogstrust.org.uk**