

Section: <b>C</b>	Policy Number: <b>C-010</b>	Approval Date: Oct. 19, 2011
Subject: <b>Pet Ownership, Visiting Pets and Service Animals</b>	Total Pages: <b>1</b>	Revision Date(s):

## **PET OWNERSHIP, VISITING PETS AND SERVICE ANIMALS POLICY**

Community Living-Central Huron recognizes that individuals supported have the right to own pets, as pets can provide companionship and positively contribute to one's quality of life. The Agency also recognizes that Staff play a key role in the success of pet ownership and in utilizing pet therapy and/or service animals. Staff will ensure that the individual's interests in pets is reflected in their Individual Support Plan. When individuals supported live with roommates, all individuals residing within the same unit of the home must be in agreement of pet ownership and/or pet visiting.

a) Household Animal Companions:

A pet requires a great deal of thought by all involved due to the personal commitment to the animal's care and welfare, as well as the health and welfare of roommates. Staff will provide information to individuals supported regarding responsibilities of pet ownership, such information to include:

- the individual who wants a pet, should have the ability, desire and financial resources to properly care for a pet;
- any local by-laws associated with pet ownership;
- everyone residing within the individual home unit must be in agreement;
- the choice of those residing in the home rather than Staff preference;
- the cost, time and quality of life associated with pets ie. nutritional and dietary needs, exercise, living space, license fees, medications, immunizations, veterinarian appointments, cage, leash, pet accessories such as toys, beds, etc.

b) Visiting Animals or Pet Therapy:

When it is not feasible to have a pet living in the home, but individuals supported wish to engage in some contact with animals, other resources may be considered, such as: established Pet Therapy resources, Humane Society, Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), petting zoo, pet shops, local vet clinic or informal pet visits from friends or family. Any such arrangements will be reflected in the Individual Support Plan. When considering these alternatives the following guidelines are to be followed to ensure the safety of individuals supported as well as animals involved:

- suitability of the animal/pet visiting, ie. temperament;
- People supported must consent to having a pet visit them in their home and visits are not to impact on people's health (ie. allergies) or emotional well being (ie. fear of dogs or cats, etc.);
- Consideration must be given to people's skills in interacting with animals and reduce risks through education, instruction and close supervision.

c) Staff Support:

Staff will ensure continuity of care through effective communication when there are changes in Staff and report any concerns pertaining to the health and welfare of individuals supported, Staff, volunteers and the pet to the relevant Supervisor.