

# Supporting families and their pets escaping domestic abuse



## **Pet Fostering Service**

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Information for pet owners escaping domestic abuse

# In Britain, most pets are part of the family.

In violent and abusive relationships, family pets are often threatened, injured or even killed by perpetrators of violence to maintain control over their partners and children. In a survey of 50 abused women pet owners living in temporary accommodation, 66% said their abuser had threatened to harm their pets; 38% said the perpetrator had harmed them and a massive 94% said if there had been a pet fostering service it would have been easier for them and their children to escape the violence. Well over half had to permanently give up their pets when going into temporary accommodation as there was no other option.

In 1998, a pet fostering service for women pet owners going into temporary accommodation in the North West was launched and has grown from strength to strength. The service is now available to everyone escaping domestic abuse, including same sex couples. If you are ready to leave, Endeavour Pets Service can help.

***Endeavour believes that no-one gets left behind and that pets are members of families too. We provide fostering for cats and all small animals, keeping them safe from domestic abuse.***

## **I am experiencing domestic abuse - how do I get help?**

Seek help from the police or from your local domestic abuse service. Visit [www.endeavourproject.org.uk](http://www.endeavourproject.org.uk) for contact details or see emergency contacts on the back page of this leaflet. REFUGE provide a 24-hour support service and can help you find emergency accommodation for you and your children. Your local authority can also support you in accessing safe accommodation.

## **If my partner harms me, how will he treat my children and my pets?**

Your partner may threaten your family members including your pets as a way of controlling you. If you are living in fear, seek help. We accept referrals for the Pets Service directly from you or from a professional working with your family.

## **If I go into temporary accommodation, who looks after my pets?**

Wherever possible we will foster your pets until you are able to move to a permanent home. This may not always be possible if, for example, we do not have an appropriate foster carer for an unusual type of pet; if the pet belongs to the perpetrator; is under 6 months old; is not an established family pet. If we cannot help we can usually give good advice such as contacting a breed specific rescue, or your vet who may have information about local services, or seeing if friends or family can give support by looking after your pet.

## **What if I have to go into refuge quickly?**

Be sure to ask for a police escort to accompany you to your home to collect your pets and other possessions. The refuge workers can advise you on this.

## How do I get my pets to the foster home?

Your pet will be collected from a safe location or from the home in conjunction with the police. We will aim to do this as quickly as possible but this is not an emergency response and planning the foster care can take us a few days to organise. We understand this can be distressing but we will keep in contact with you and let you know when the foster placement has been organised.

## Could my partner trace me through my pet?

**ABSOLUTELY NOT.** Endeavour Pets Service has been specially structured so you cannot be traced through your pets. Only highly trained volunteers and workers who understand the vital importance of strictest confidentiality will know where you and your pets are. The foster carers will not know where you are. To maintain safety, dogs will be fostered well away from your area and you will not be able to visit your pet. The Pets Service will ensure your pets are well cared for and you will be kept up-to-date on how they are doing.

## Does my pet need to be vaccinated?

It is better for your cat or dog to have had regular vaccinations. However, we know that this has not always been possible. We will assume your pet has not been vaccinated unless you can bring its vaccination certificate with it. If it has been vaccinated, it will be easier to find a placement.

## What pet items should I take when moving my pet to safety?

If you are able to plan for your pet's departure, try to have the following items in a safe place and out of your partner's reach:

- ✓ Cat carriers
- ✓ Medication, if any
- ✓ Vaccination certificate
- ✓ Information sheet on what and how you feed your pet, medical conditions, likes / dislikes, any possible behavioural problems
- ✓ Bowls, bedding, toys, grooming brushes, favourite blanket etc.

## Would my pets be better off if I put them up for adoption?

Only you can make that decision. Endeavour Pets Service can help by fostering your pet while you are in the refuge - but inevitably some people decide that it will be better all round to find their pet a new home. Giving up a beloved pet is sad; but realising that a pet is safe and happy in a new home can make the decision to leave a violent situation easier.

Your local animal rescue centre might be able to find a permanent home for your pet. Try to give them as much information about its background as you can; behaviour, likes and dislikes. If you decide this is for the best, you may want to take some pictures of your pet for you and your children to keep.



*"If you are ready to leave, Endeavour Pets Service can help"*



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## In an emergency!

The **Pets Service** is not an emergency service and our working hours are:  
**9.30am - 5pm, Monday to Friday.**

### ***IN AN EMERGENCY SITUATION PLEASE CALL 999***

This is when you are in fear of your safety and the threat to you or your family could endanger life. If you need to log or report any abuse that is not an emergency please contact:

**Greater Manchester Police on 101 or report via live chat on the GMP website.**

### **24-hour Domestic Violence Helpline** Freephone CALL - 0808 2000 247

Visit [www.endeavourproject.org.uk](http://www.endeavourproject.org.uk) for useful contacts.

Endeavour provides a number of unique and diverse support services, making a real difference to all those affected by domestic abuse. By providing bespoke safety plans and support packages we empower people and their pets to live lives free from abuse with a positive and caring future. For further details visit [www.endeavourproject.org.uk](http://www.endeavourproject.org.uk)

We are committed to equal opportunities in all aspects of our work.



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