



COPING  
WITH THE  
LOSS OF A  
BELOVED  
PET



*Help, advice  
and information  
on what to do  
and how to deal  
with pet  
bereavement*



# WHEN YOUR PET DIES...

*Jo-Ann Dono,  
Head of the Pet  
Bereavement  
Support Service,  
offers help and  
advice following  
the loss of a loved  
companion.*



**S**adly, pet death is an inevitable part of pet ownership. Even with this knowledge, however pet owners are often not fully prepared for their reaction following the loss of their pet.

Reactions vary from person to person and depend on a number of factors: the specific relationship with a pet, length of ownership, circumstances of death, support system for the owner and so on. For some people, the loss of their pet may result in a few days sadness and the shedding of tears. For others, the impact of the loss may be greater and feelings of sadness, despair, loneliness and even depression may last for several weeks and months.

## GRIEVING FOR A PET

Research and personal testimonies have shown that grieving for a pet can follow a similar pattern to that for a grieving person, although intensity and length may vary. Initial reactions to the death of a pet include numbness and shock, perhaps at the time of receiving a terminal diagnosis, or for a short period following the death. It almost feels as if the world has stopped and it is difficult to take in information and concentrate on tasks. This may be followed by a period of denial - of the death or of the pain.

When the full impact of the loss starts to sink in, a person may experience intense feelings of sadness, despair, pining, anxiety and sometimes even physical pain.

Feelings of guilt and self-questioning may also be overwhelming, particularly, if a decision has been taken to euthanase a much loved pet. Empty beds and food bowls, meeting people in the street, are painful reminders of the loss. It is also at this point that a period of depression may ensue, when a person feels devastated and unable to cope - sleep and eating patterns may be affected and it appears that nobody really understands. Full acceptance of a pet's death is a gradual process but a time will come when a person feels less painful talking about the loss with others, and is able to re-adjust to the home environment without the pet, by removing food bowls and bedding etc. When the pain has finally subsided and a person is able to reflect and talk freely about the happy memories shared with the pet, the path to recovery is well underway.



It is fairly common for people to experience waves of these emotions, which become less intense over time. It may also be that a person's reaction to the loss of their pet may take them by surprise. An understanding of this process and the normality of grieving for a pet, as well as allowing them to grieve, may all ease the pain.

## GETTING ANOTHER ANIMAL

At various points during the grieving process, the question whether or not to take on another animal may feel addressing. Again, there are no clear rules about when the most appropriate time will be, if that is indeed what is decided. Some people miss the presence of an animal, particularly, if there are no other pets in the household, and will take on another pet fairly soon. For others, there may be other emotional or practical issues that they will want to resolve before considering another pet.

*“there are ways in which a person can ease the pain...”*

They may be in so much emotional pain that they will want to avoid having to go through the process again, and therefore decide against it; or they may feel they are being disloyal to the dead pet if they take on another pet. All these factors need to be carefully considered and a person will know in their heart when the time feels right to reinvest their love in another pet. A useful guideline is when a person feels able to reflect on previous happy times without being overwhelmed by the pain of the loss and, ultimately, feels comfortable with the possibility of taking on another pet. If a new pet is chosen, a person needs to be aware that the new pet can never be exactly like the previous pet, even if it is of the same breed,

and comparisons can often lead to disappointment and further pain. Getting a new pet is not a question of “replacing” a previous pet, but rather one of investing one's love as a tribute to the love and companionship that was shared with the previous pet.

## SUPPORT

Devastating as the loss of a pet may be, there are ways in which a person can ease the pain. Writing letters or poems, putting together a book of memories, planting a rose or finding some other way to mark the life shared with a pet, can be particularly helpful during this difficult time. Grieving for a pet need not be a lonely experience and it can also be comforting for people to talk about their feelings to others who understand some of what they are experiencing. Services such as the Pet Bereavement Support Service exist to provide confidential support over the telephone.

Trained volunteer befrienders are available to listen to bereaved pet owners with compassion and understanding, as they work through their grief. All volunteers have lost pets of their own at some point in their lives and are available to listen sympathetically and offer comfort and reassurance to pet owners when they need it most.

*The helpline is open daily  
8.30am-5pm, with an  
answerphone outside these hours.  
The freephone number is  
**0800 096 6606.***



## HELP AND ADVICE

### THE BLUE CROSS

One of Britain's oldest animal welfare charities providing advice, practical care and charitable veterinary treatment for thousands of pets every year.

### SOCIETY FOR COMPANION ANIMAL STUDIES (SCAS)

SCAS is a registered charity dedicated to increasing knowledge and understanding of the relationship between people and companion animals.

# PRE-ARRANGEMENT PLANS FOR TOTAL PEACE OF MIND

*Anyone who owns a pet will understand the special joy that they can bring, the unbounded loyalty they show us and the fun and companionship they provide throughout their lives. In fact many of us have the same, or sometimes stronger, feelings for our pets as we do for other members of our family. All of this makes it hard to face up to the fact that one day our pets will pass away.*



**C**oping with the death of a pet can be a heartbreaking experience. In a state of grief it can be difficult to think rationally and make the right decisions about the final care of a loyal companion. For this reason it is vitally important for pet owners to know in advance

what options there are available to them, from the collection of the body from home or the vets, or to the types of cremation service and the choice of caskets and



memorials available. When the time comes, and this could be anytime of day or night, simply knowing where to turn, can in itself be a comfort.

Sensible forward planning can help to smooth away some of the emotional stress that is felt at this time, so it is good to know that there is a service which at the end, provides the best care.

Premier Care Services was established by PCS, one of the leading national pet crematorium groups in the UK, in order to give your pet dignity when the time finally comes to say goodbye.

The issues of care and respect are key to the PCS approach. Recognising that the relationship between pet and owner is unique, PCS have introduced the Premier Care Service Plan, a pre-arrangement, pre-payment plan designed for complete flexibility. The plan enables owners to choose the specific arrangements that they want for the final care of their pet. For instance, some owners will wish to have their pet collected from home or the vets when they die.



PCS will happily do this as soon as they are contacted. However, others prefer to attend the cremation personally and may wish to bring their pet with them, in which case they will be given a warm and friendly welcome at the Chapel of Rest and will be able to spend time in the wonderfully serene garden of remembrance.

Premier Care Services offer a wide range of caskets and urns to choose from, all of which can be engraved for the return of your pets 'ashes'. If you attend the cremation you can take the casket home with you but, if you feel that you don't want to, it will be returned to you within a few days.

Owners will often want to mark their pets passing in a permanent way to remind them of the pleasure and fun that they shared, perhaps by simply making an entry in the book of remembrance, held at the crematorium, or by investing in a quality garden memorial.

There is a selection to choose from, ranging from a traditional engraved marble headstone to a beautifully oiled hardwood cross, complete with engraved brass effect plaque.

Whatever arrangements are chosen, the flexibility of the plan means these can be changed at any time. Premier Care Services will provide a firm quote, calculated according to current prices.

You can pay the full amount straight away or, if you wish, by instalments, on a 12, 24 or 36 month basis.

*If you would like to find out more about Premier Care Services, or get a free, no obligation quote, you can contact the Premier Care enquiry line on 0870 60 70 706, between 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, or visit the website at [www.pconline.org.uk](http://www.pconline.org.uk)*



PCS believe that the personal preferences you arrange for your companion should be as individual as they are, so with a Premier Care Services plan you have the flexibility to choose the arrangements that you want, with the reassurance of knowing that when the time comes nothing will be left to chance - everything you've planned will be carried out with the utmost professional care, giving you total peace of mind.

Pre-arranging and pre-paying for your pet's final passing not only makes sound financial sense but will give you a feeling of contentment. Don't put it off, by acting now you'll take away the worry about what might happen in the future and you can simply get on with enjoying the fun and companionship of your pet today, after all, that's what having a pet is all about.

# YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

*When the time finally comes to bid farewell to a faithful friend there will obviously be a number of questions you will want to ask to set your mind at rest. Here are a few of the questions we at Pet Cremation Services find to be the most frequently asked.*

## **Who and where are Pet Cremation Services?**

PCS have been providing a service to both the veterinary industry and the general public for the past thirty years.

Due to our excellent standard of service and understanding of the public's requirements, we now have three crematoriums strategically situated throughout the United Kingdom which service veterinary practices, issuing this booklet.



## **What should I do if my pet passes away?**

You can contact us through your veterinary surgery or direct on **01604 740 220**.

## **What are my options?**

We can either collect your pet from your local veterinary surgery or directly from your home using our Premier Care Service.



## **How are my pets ashes returned?**

All clients are given a choice of wooden caskets with brass nameplates or handmade bone china urns.



## **How can I be sure I have received my own pet's ashes?**

This is the most common question that we get asked. The answer is that we have several crematoriums placed around the country dedicated to the purpose of individual cremations. If you still have reservations, you are more than welcome to visit the crematorium at the time of the cremation, where you can also utilise our chapel of rest facilities.



## **Can we have a plaque as a memorial to our pet?**

Yes, we can arrange a variety of memorial plaques. A small selection of the garden memorials are pictured below. A larger selection of memorials are shown later in this leaflet and on our web-site at [www.pcsonline.org.uk](http://www.pcsonline.org.uk)



## **What times are you open?**

You can reach us Mon-Fri between office hours or alternatively follow the instructions on our answer phone service, or visit our web-site.

Phone: 01604 740 220

Fax: 01604 740 737

Web-site: [www.pcsonline.org.uk](http://www.pcsonline.org.uk)

# A FITTING TRIBUTE



*The passing of a loved pet can leave an enormous gap in our lives. The time you shared together was special and can never be replaced. But there are a number of ways your pet can be remembered.*

Many pet owners would like some form of memorial for their pet, a memorial helps you remember your loved friend and can be a great source of comfort - it is a reminder of all the joy your pet brought to you during the time you spent together.

The simplest memorial could be a favourite photo, enlarged, framed and printed onto a special textured material - or even a complete dedicated photo album depicting your memories.

Another popular memorial is to position something in the garden, a plant, a pot or possibly, a dedicated plaque.

As pet lovers ourselves, we understand the emotional attachment between owner and pet and for that reason we can offer you a lasting reminder of your companion - a range of beautiful memorials personalised for your pet, some of which are shown on the opposite page.

We have a wide range of garden memorials from plaques, crosses, rosebowls and pawstones - each tastefully designed and individually engraved with your pet's name and your special message or private thought.

We know a memorial can never fill the gap created by the loss of a pet but sometimes it can help to ease the pain by providing a fitting tribute and constant reminder of a trusted friend who filled a special place in the life of you and your family.



## GARDEN MEMORIALS

*This is only a small selection of the tastefully designed garden memorials available through Pet Cremation Services. For more information please call 0870 60 70 706 or visit our web-site at [www.pcsonline.org.uk](http://www.pcsonline.org.uk)*



**THE DERWENT STONE**  
A traditional marble headstone. This long lasting tribute can be engraved with your own words of remembrance. Available in black marble with white text or white marble with black text.



**TEESDALE MEMORIAL**  
The most popular standard memorial we offer. Finished in a black marble effect laminate, complete with a securing stake. The brass effect plaque can be engraved with up to three lines of text.



**THE RICHMOND PLAQUE**  
A solid Brass plaque engraved with your own personal inscription. The plaque is screwed to an oiled hardwood plinth and is attached to a 380mm securing stake.



**THE DURHAM CROSS**  
A beautiful oiled hardwood cross, complete with a brass effect plaque that can be engraved.



**PLINTH & STAKE**  
A quality oiled wooden plinth incorporating a large area for your special engraved tribute. Attached to a 320mm securing stake.



**GILDED CROSS**  
This unique design has been specially developed where a few simple words are preferred. The gold coloured markings on the face reflect the sun's rays.



**WALL PLAQUE**  
A quality oiled wooden plaque incorporating a large area for your special engraved tribute.



**PAWSTONES**  
All available in 3 colour finishes - terracotta, slate and buff with a large personalised engraving plate. Can be fixed flat into a patio area, flat in borders or cemented into a wall.

To view a full range of our memorials visit our web site at [www.pcsonline.org.uk](http://www.pcsonline.org.uk), or call for a brochure on 0870 60 70 706

# SAYING GOODBYE

*At PCS we know the loss of a pet arouses feelings of disbelief, hopelessness, resentment and grief that all seem too much to bear.*

*That is why we ensure that nothing is left to chance and every wish for your pet's passing is undertaken, with the dignity they deserve and the reassurance you require.*

*Here are a few of the many letters, poems and comments from the Book of Remembrance at our own Chapel of Rest from people we have helped to say goodbye.*

Thank you very much for all you did for us on the day we lost our beloved pet Douglas, on 5.7.00 aged 12 3/4 years. Your thoughtfulness helped to ease the pain. He was a very active and alert little dog until the end. He is sadly missed by everyone who knew him and the house seems empty without him.

**Alison & John Banks**  
Leicester

Just a few words to sincerely thank you for the kindness shown to myself and my boyfriend (and our dog Gemma) when we came over on May 14th for Lucy's cremation. It helped us both enormously to be able to spend that last precious hour in the Chapel of Rest with her after her tragic death two days earlier. Sincere thanks also for 18 months earlier when we lost Sheba on November 5th 1997.

Both dogs were very much loved and very sadly missed.

**Julie Everett**  
Birmingham

P.S. We hope to return this Summer to place a memorial to both dogs at West Lodge Farm.



Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Fluff

Thank you very much for the thoughtful way that you have dealt with the cremation of my beloved cat and constant companion of nearly 16 years. His sudden illness and then having to be 'put to sleep' has been so traumatic, but I have been helped by your kind wishes.

The casket is so beautiful and exactly the right colour. Fluff was a lovely ginger cat and the colour of the wood reminds me of his beautiful ginger fur.

Best wishes

**Mrs. Janice Thomas**  
West Yorks

To everyone at PCS

Thank you so much for taking care of my cockatiel Joey, I didn't expect something so lovely. I'd had Joey for 6 years, he was very special to me, he could talk, whistle, give a kiss and even burp and wouldn't stop until you said 'pardon you'.

Our dog Sasha keeps looking for him too, Joey loved her to lick him.

When he passed away it broke my heart, he was my best friend, he deserved something special and thanks to you, you made it possible, he is now in his favourite spot in the lounge.

Thank you so much.

**Mrs Lynn Stockall and Joey**

\* Names have been changed to protect confidentiality



## GOODNIGHT JOEY

Goodnight Joey, give Mommy a kiss  
Your favourite words I dearly miss.  
With a tut and a shake of your head  
When you gave me a kiss as we went to bed.  
For 6 years you were my best friend  
Why did it all have to end?  
I feel my world is torn apart  
You have left me with a broken heart.  
I remember all you could say and do  
And I promise to always love you.  
I hope you're not lonely,  
but happy and free  
Up there in heaven waiting for me.  
It was a privilege to share your life with you  
To watch and listen to all you could do.  
You will always be with me in my mind and heart  
So we will never be apart.  
I always said 'I'll never give Joey up no matter what'  
and these words I have never forgot.  
Even after life I have kept my word  
To a very special bird.  
So goodnight Joey, give Mommy a kiss  
You I will forever miss.



## MISSED AND LOVED

Up to God our Oscar has gone  
Missed and loved by everyone.  
But we will think of him everyday  
With all the other animals he will play.

Luckily now he has no pain  
We know he was sent here to our gain.  
But he will still wander in our hearts  
But if the truth be told,  
we will never ever part.

## THE LONGEST DAYS

The empty space you've left behind  
No one could ever fill.  
For it belongs to only you  
And it always will.  
The sweet sound of your woofs  
I hear once in a while.  
It echoes in my head  
And brings a little smile.  
For since you have been taken  
To pleasant pastures new.  
My heart clings to each memory  
That I hold my love of you.  
Your sparkling eyes, your sweetness  
Your special little ways.  
Are thoughts that I recall  
To help me through the longest days.



## PET CREMATION SERVICES

### DONCASTER

Bentley Moor Lane, Carcroft Common, Adwick-le-Street, Doncaster S.Yorkshire DN6 7BD  
Tel: 01302 726 144 Fax: 01302 728 730

### NEWBURY

Yew Tree Farm, Ball Hill, Newbury, Berkshire, RG20 0NG  
Tel: 01635 254 038 Fax: 01635 254 038

### GUILSBOROUGH

West Lodge Farm, West Haddon Road, Guilsborough, Northamptonshire NN6 8QE  
Tel: 01604 740 220 Fax: 01604 740 737

[www.pconline.org.uk](http://www.pconline.org.uk)

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