

## 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 forty years.

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

### 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 crematoria placed around the country dedicated to the purpose of individual, one pet one chamber 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.



To find out more about PCS services and range of pet tributes and urns please ask at reception for our product brochures or visit our website at:

[www.pconline.org.uk](http://www.pconline.org.uk) Tel: 01604 740864

## Support

As 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, it can 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 Blue Cross - Pet Bereavement Support Services helpline is open daily 8.30am - 8.30pm with an answering phone outside these hours. The free phone number is **0800 096 6606** (UK only including Northern Ireland). Alternatively, you can also email the Pet Bereavement Support Service on [pbssmail@bluecross.org.uk](mailto:pbssmail@bluecross.org.uk) Further support is available on the Blue Cross PBSS [www.bluecross.org.uk/petloss](http://www.bluecross.org.uk/petloss) site.

## 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.

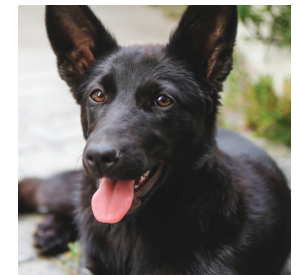
## COMPASSION UNDERSTOOD

Is a resource helping to provide pet owners with clear information to understanding end of life pet care and pet loss support guidance. For further information please visit [www.compassionunderstood.com/page/where-to-find-support](http://www.compassionunderstood.com/page/where-to-find-support)



Accredited by the International Association of Pet Cemeteries and Crematories

## For when the time comes...



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





## The loss of a loved companion

Sadly, the loss of a pet is an inevitable part of pet ownership. However, pet owners are often not fully prepared for their reactions when this happens.

Reactions vary from person to person and depend upon a number of factors: the specific relationship with their pet, the length of ownership, the circumstances surrounding the death, the 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 or even months.



## Grieving for a pet

Research and personal testimonies have shown that grieving for a pet follows a similar pattern to grieving for a human relation, although intensity and length may vary. Initial reactions to the death of a pet can include numbness and shock, extending from the time of receiving a terminal diagnosis, or for a short period following the death. It feels almost as if the world has stopped and it is difficult to take in information or to 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, even 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 the pain of loss eases and it becomes less stressful to talk about the loss with others, and it becomes possible to re-adjust to the home environment without the pet.

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.



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## When or should I get another pet?

At various points during the grieving process, the question of whether or not to begin a new relationship with another pet may arise. 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 or companions in the home and will, as a result, be prepared to adopt another pet fairly soon. For others, there may be other emotional or practical issues that they will want to resolve before they consider adopting another pet.

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 adopt another pet so soon.

If a new pet is chosen, the owner 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. Adopting 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.

'there are ways in which a person can ease the pain...'

