



Animal House
Veterinary surgery

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BOARDING KENNELS / PET CARERS

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE

You take your pet to stay at a boarding kennels. They will live in a run and be looked after by kennel assistants. There are likely to be many other pets living around them in similar kennels. It does not mimic the home environment for most animals. They will need to be up to date with their vaccinations. Dogs will need a kennel cough vaccination no later than 10 days before they attend the kennels.

Pet carers are people who come into your home to look after your pet(s). This means that the animal does not need extra vaccinations.

Pet carers can be people who take your pet into their home. In this case your pet needs full vaccinations as these carers may have their own animals or have had others in their house. Both of these options have a home environment with the only obvious thing missing for your pet is you.

CHOOSE A GOOD KENNELS

The kennels should take a medical history of your pet and be able to cope with any routine giving of medication, i.e. if your pet takes regular heart pills, or arthritis treatment. They should ask for your vet's contact details in case of any ill health whilst you are away. They should ask for your contact numbers or for a designated person you trust, in case of questions or problems during your absence. Make sure they have an isolation area for animals that may be disease carriers to be kept in away from other animals. You should visit the kennels to have a look at the environment. Is the place clean and friendly. Do the people play with the animals and keep them stimulated. Ask what they do in an emergency and what qualifications the staff have. Will they feed your pet its usual diet to avoid tummy upsets? Ask other pet owners who they recommend. Kennels that had a good reputation years ago may now be different. Kennels with poor standards years ago may now be good. Always check for yourself. Treat your pet to a practice overnight stay before you leave them for a longer period. If they are desperately unhappy after one night then it does not seem sensible for them to stay there for two weeks. Lots of kennels look after dogs, cats and take small furrries like guinea pigs and rabbits for boarding too. They often have grooming facilities you can use too. If you do not feel confident of the place you have visited then do not use it. Kennelling can be viewed as your pet's holiday in an animal hotel. You find details in 'phone directories.

CHOOSE A GOOD PET CARER

You can ask a friend to look after your pets but there are also organisations that can do this for you. The practical advantage over a boarding kennels is that you have your house babysat too. Be aware that if you do not know the person very well they may not keep the house to your standards and they could potentially be lazy in looking after your pet. If you choose an organisation you must take references. Expect a business to offer people qualified in giving medication and capable of looking after needy pets. This can be a more comfortable option if your pet is old or has an illness where you think kennelling is unsuitable. If you are away for a short time, i.e. a weekend away, then you could choose people to come in several times a day

and check your pet rather than have them live-in. This is suitable in the case of cats and small furries but not for dogs as they should only be left for hours and not days.

There is an organisation that takes your pets to live with another family whilst you are away. They home visit you first to find out about your pets' requirements and then contact you with the details of a suitable home for them to go to for their stay. The people looking after your pet know your pets' needs and only take on the responsibility if they are happy to cope. This can be suitable for animals that need constant attention as well as healthy non-problematical pets. Again, they take all your contact details in case they need to speak to you. This option can be viewed as a holiday for your pet as you take your own holiday.

If you leave a pet unattended for 48 hours this is abandonment and illegal. Expect to be prosecuted.

If you do not like the idea of kennels or pet carers then consider the **pet passport scheme** to take your pet away with you.