

Can pets be cared for under a Will?

Your pet is not an individual or legal entity and is therefore considered an asset of your estate and so cannot be a beneficiary.

Although it is not possible for you to leave money or property to your pet directly, there are ways to ensure your pet is looked after, after your death.

What options do you have?

Leaving money in a Trust

You can opt to leave your money in a Trust, stating in your Will that the money is to be used for the purposes of caring for your pet. You would have to appoint a specific person or people as Trustee(s) who will use the money left in the Trust to look after your pet as they see fit.

Like with a loved one, you may want to set out specific requirements as to how your pet should be looked after. You can do this by having a Letter of Wishes which would be supplementary to your Will. The Trustee will be able to rely on this as a form of guidance on how to take care of your pet.

Nominating someone

You could choose a family member or a friend to give a gift of money to be spent for the care and maintenance of your pet.

Appointing a charity

You could, in your Will, instruct for your pet to be taken to a charity after your death. You may wish to nominate a specific charity for a specific breed, or you may choose a more general animal charity to look after your pet until it is rehomed.

Amount you can leave for the care of your pet

In short, the amount should be reasonable for the pet. Factors you may consider include:

- What kind of animal is your pet?
- How long is your pet's life expectancy?
- How old is your pet?
- How costly is the maintenance of the pet?

There is a possibility for your gift to fail because the amount is not appropriate for your pet. This can be overcome by stating in your will that any excess money after the death of your pet be given to an individual or be put into another cause, for example, an animal charity.



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