

STAY TOGETHER FOR THE PET

-15% admit to having only stayed with a partner to keep their shared pet happy -

- 14% of pets need medication post a couples' break-up -

As a nation, we have never been more obsessed with our pets, and Britons will go to ever-greater lengths to keep their furry friends happy. In fact, some will now even go as far as to stay in a relationship with a partner they would otherwise look to break up with, just to keep their pet cat or dog content.

That's according to a new study from pet insurers MORE TH>N which reveals that a whopping 15% of pet owning Brits admit to having come close to splitting up with a partner, only to ultimately stay together because they were worried about the negative effect doing so might have on the pet they share.

Topping the list of people's concerns that led them to reluctantly staying with a partner who they shared a pet with was that of being unable to decide who should take custody of the animal (36%), followed closely by not wanting to take the pet to a rescue centre (25%).

Concerns around the potential emotional repercussions for the pet were also revealed, with 14% saying it came down to feeling guilty about how the animal would feel post break-up, resulting in them staying with their partner just to preserve their pet's emotional welfare.

These latent concerns about the effect a split could have on a pet are arguably justified in part of the survey by MORE TH>N which quizzed people who **had** taken the leap of faith and opted to split from a partner, despite sharing a pet.

Of those that had endured such an incident, over a third (36%) said the change in living arrangements made their pet confused, following closely by feelings of anxiety (27%), sadness (25%) and even signs of distress (10%), showing that the emotional effects of a break-up aren't just reserved for humans.

In the event of more extreme cases, a further 21% even admitted that they were so concerned for their pet's welfare after a split that they took them to a vet to have them cared for, with 14% saying their pet was subsequently prescribed medication to help them through the ordeal, illustrating just how serious an issue it can be.

The logistical challenges of animal ownership post-break were also detailed as part of the study, with pet custody battles a growing trend. Indeed, the study revealed that people would now be more likely to fight over custody of a pet (11%) than traditional

areas of contestation in the midst of a split, such as money (7%) and shared possessions (4%).

In the case of more amicable parting of ways, 8% admitted to effectively sharing custody of the pet to allow both people to see the animal regularly. Less harmonious break-ups proved slightly more popular however, with 12% saying their pet now lives with a partner and they're no longer allowed to see it.

John Ellenger, head of pet insurance at MORE TH>N said: "It is true that our beloved pets have never played a more important role in our day-to-day lives. As our study reveals, a number of pet owners will remain in a relationship with a partner in order to prevent their shared pet from experiencing any negative effects from a breakup. It is testament to the lengths we'll go to protect our pets' emotional wellbeing – even if it means making sacrifices of our own. That said, if couples do decide to split and they share an animal, it remains important to keep the pet's best interests at heart when arranging its future living arrangements, as a means of minimising the stress of lifestyle changes as much as possible."

-ENDS-

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Notes to Editors

Research conducted by OnePoll on behalf of MORE TH>N Pet Insurance. 2,000 pet owners were surveyed.

About MORE TH>N

MORE TH>N is the direct financial services arm of RSA. Established in 2001, the company offers car, home, pet, business and travel insurance.