

Half Of Dog Owners Rely On Friends & Family, Saving £4,500 A Year

Submitted by: K9 Media Ltd

Friday, 25 May 2012

- + Almost half (46 percent) of dog owners need family support to take care of their dog
- + Family 'doggy day care' saves owners £4,500 a year

Almost half (46 per cent) of Britain's dog owners rely on friends and family to look after their pooches whilst they are at work, according to new research from Direct Line pet insurance.

This unpaid 'doggy day care' saves dog owners more than £4,000 a year, when compared to the cost of hiring a professional dog walker or sitter.

The research reveals the extent to which dog owners are dependant on the generosity of others, with more than a quarter (27%) relying on friends and family to walk their dog on a daily basis.

For owners without friends and family support, a professional dog walker / sitter can prove an expensive option. Nearly a third of owners (32%) fall into this category, paying on average £375* a month or £4,500 a year for a professional dog walking service.

Despite these costs, 85 percent of owners said they would cut back on non-essentials to pay for a professional dog walker if their personal circumstances changed and just 2% said they would consider rehoming their dog.

Adam Whiteley, head of pet insurance (<http://www.directline.com/pet/welcome.htm>) for Direct Line, said: "Owning a pet is a big commitment. Before buying a dog, prospective owners should consider what support they have around to help care for the animal. The voluntary support provided by friends and family is invaluable and without it many people may not be able to own a dog."

K9 Magazine (<http://www.k9magazine.com>) editor-in-chief Ryan O'Meara added; "These findings really do strengthen the view that modern pet owners will go to any length possible to make sure their pets are well cared for and taken care of – even in their absence. The fact that 85% of dog owners would cut back on their own non-essentials if need be and 13% would work longer hours to cover their pet care costs in the form of doggy day care or even professional dog walkers just shows how many dog owners really do place their pet's needs first."

- ENDS

Notes to editors:

* Based on the average figure quoted to survey respondents as given by them from possible pet care providers.

Specialist pet research firm petbuzz / K9 Media Ltd interviewed 1,259 dog owners during April 2012.

For further details and to arrange accompanying images and interviews, please contact Kim O'Meara on 0845

163 1238 / 07903 410 421.

Or please contact:

Mark Lester
PR Manager
Direct Line
Mark.lester@rbs.co.uk
07917 598 585
Direct Line

Started in 1985, Direct Line became the first UK insurance company to use the telephone as its main channel of communication. It provides motor, home, travel and pet insurance cover direct to customers by phone or on-line.

Direct Line is part of RBS Insurance, the number one car and home insurer in the UK (based on policies in force 2010) and is wholly owned by the Royal Bank of Scotland Group. Customers can find out more about Direct Line products or get a quote by calling 0845 246 3761 or visiting www.directline.com

Direct Line insurance policies are underwritten by U K Insurance Limited, Registered office: The Wharf, Neville Street, Leeds LS1 4AZ. Registered in England and Wales no 1179980. U K Insurance Limited are authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority.