



Pets and animals policy

1. Purpose and scope

This policy sets out our approach to requests from customers to have a pet as well as the keeping of pets and animals by customers in our general needs housing, sheltered properties, supported accommodation and care homes, and aims to encourage responsible pet ownership as well as minimising related complaints.

2. Underpinning principles

The following legislation is of particular relevance to this policy.

- Animal Welfare Act 2006
- Consumer Rights Act 2015
- Housing Act 1996
- Torts (Interference with Goods Act) 1977

We are contractually bound by any terms and conditions in our tenancy agreements relating to pets and animals. We must also comply with the Regulator of Social Housing Neighbourhood and Community Standard 2012 and the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard 2017.

3. Policy details

Definition

The definition of a pet is normally considered to be a domestic animal such as a dog or cat which depends on a human for food.

Benefits and responsibilities

We recognise the benefits that responsible pet ownership can bring such as enhancing the owner's mental and physical health and encouraging exercise. However, customers must adhere to their legal and welfare obligations and those under their conditions of tenancy. We recognise that nuisance from pets and animals can impact on our ability to manage our homes, estates and communities.



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Permission

Requests from new customers to keep a pet are dealt with by the lettings coordinators, and requests from existing customers are dealt with by the neighbourhood assistants/sheltered housing coordinators.

Each case will be considered in accordance with the customer's tenancy agreement, any restrictive covenants, the nature of the property and our lettings policy. We will also take account of an individual's circumstances such as evidenced medical need and will apply case by case discretion where appropriate. We will make it clear when we advertise homes for letting if they are suitable for pets or not.

For existing customers, permission to have a pet will be subject to a satisfactory property inspection, unless staff are already aware of the condition of the property having carried out a home visit in the last 12 months.

Pets will normally be allowed in our properties with prior consent which will not be unreasonably withheld. However, pets such as cats and dogs will not be allowed to be kept in flats in sheltered schemes where there are communal entrances, corridors, areas or facilities such as a lounge or laundry, and the same restrictions also apply to our general needs flats unless the customer has their own exclusive personal exit from the building.

Caged pets, e.g. canaries, hamsters, etc may be allowed in homes where we wouldn't normally allow cats or dogs, but animals which require a hutch/run such as rabbits, guinea pigs and tortoises will not.

Permission to keep an assistance animal should be granted if it has been provided by a recognised organisation, e.g. a member of Assistance Dogs (UK), or if there is sufficient supporting documentation from a health professional for a medical condition where the pet will significantly improve the customer's well-being. In such cases the customer will be allowed to keep no more than one normal domestic pet such as a cat or a dog, provided it is well looked after, does not cause a nuisance or annoyance to anyone and is not in contravention of any legal restrictions or obligations.

If a customer has been granted written permission for a pet prior to the



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implementation of this policy that permission will continue.

We may withdraw permission for a customer to keep a pet or animal or ask them to rehome it if it causes a nuisance or it constitutes a breach of tenancy, any restrictive covenants, this policy or the pets and animals guidance.

If a customer's pet dies and they want to replace it they will need our permission to do so. This is because they may have obtained the pet before this policy became effective, there could have been changes to the policy, the type of animal might be different or the customer's circumstances may have changed, e.g. property condition, affordability, ability to care for the animal, etc.

Looking after someone else's pet

Customers will need written permission before looking after someone else's pet or animal which, if granted, will be for a limited period of time.

Refusing permission

Permission to keep a pet or animal may be refused on the following grounds (this is not an exhaustive list).

1. There is a breach of tenancy, a restrictive covenant, this policy or the pets and animals guidance.
2. An unsatisfactory property inspection.
3. If the prospective owner has any convictions for or a history of:
 - abandonment, cruelty, neglect or mistreatment of animals
 - offences such as those committed under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991
 - disqualification from keeping animals
 - tenancy enforcement action in relation to pets or animals.
4. If the customer can't meet the welfare needs of the pet or animal.



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This includes customers in arrears with no repayment plan in place because of our concerns around affordability.

5. If the animal is classified as dangerous.
6. If the customer wants to keep livestock (unless the tenancy agreement or any restrictive covenants state otherwise).
7. If the customer wants to breed or sell animals.
8. If the customer wants to foster animals (these cannot be classed as pets due to the temporary nature of the care involved).
9. Pest infestations.

If a customer wants to mutual exchange into a property where pets are not allowed the exchange will be refused if they are not willing to rehome their pet.

Breaches of tenancy or restrictive covenants

We will work with customers to try and resolve any breaches of tenancy or restrictive covenants, but if this is unsuccessful we will take legal action which could include applying for an injunction or instigating possession proceedings. Customers who have not had permission to keep a pet at their home may be granted retrospective permission if it is appropriate.

Issues considered to be a nuisance include:

- dogs barking incessantly (but not one-off instances or for short periods), dogs mess not being cleaned up or dog attacks
- pets not being kept under control (e.g. on a lead)
- pets causing damage to property (for which customers will be liable).

As cats are roaming animals we do not consider them entering or messing in gardens to be a nuisance. However, a list of deterrents to prevent such issues can be found in our pets and animals guidance. We will also work with the RSPCA about any pet welfare concerns. Any



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customer found to be mistreating a pet or animal will have permission to keep them removed immediately and the RSPCA notified. The local authority will also be notified of any statutory nuisance.

Burial

Customers are not permitted to bury a deceased pet or animal in their garden or in a communal area. Instead, they should use a reputable pet and animal cemetery, details of which can be obtained from their local veterinary practice. The reason for this is because of the environmental factors associated with burying a pet or animal on domestic premises, and the fact that if the customer moves to another property they will not be allowed to return to visit the grave.

4. Signposting

- Animal Health Act 1981
- Animals Act 1971
- Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Breeding and Sale of Dogs (Welfare) Act 1999
- Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005
- Control of Dogs Order 1992
- Dangerous Dogs Act 1991
- Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
- Dogs Act 1906
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- National Assistance Act 1948 – s48
- The Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015
- The Welfare of Animals (Transport) (England) Order 2006
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- RSPCA – Housing – A Guide To Good Practice 2017
- Anti-social behaviour policy
- Anti-social behaviour procedure
- Eviction procedure
- Lettings policy
- Lettings procedure
- Neighbourhood management policy
- Neighbourhood management procedure
- Pets and animals guidance

Policy Review Date – 28 March 2026



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Decision-making record

Date	Meeting/Minute Reference	Version /Amendment
28 March 2017	Verena Buchanan	1
19 September 2018	Verena Buchanan	2
25 February 2020	Executive Team	3
12 March 2020	Verena Buchanan	4
28 March 2023	Executive Team Updated, some aspects of the pets and animals guidance incorporated into the policy, some additional issues included, clarification given to certain matters and some changes made to the wording.	5