



Pets and animals review report

In February 2023 we invited 5 customers to take part in our pets and animals review. Our customers were asked to examine our policy and guidance and then join us in focus groups to discuss how we might improve things.

The tenancy agreement determines if customers can keep pets and what types. There are approximately 20 different types of tenancy and therefore several decisions need to be made on a case-by-case basis.

We asked customers to share their thoughts to 6 questions. Below you will find an infographic with the key changes that have been made as well as customer’s comments and Selwood Housing’s response to each question.

Pets and animals review

You said, we did

In February 2023 we invited 5 customers to take part in our pets and animals review. Our customers were asked to examine our policy and guidance and then join us in focus groups to discuss how we might improve things.

You said	We did
Promote the policy and guidance more.	We will update the website to include the frequently asked question sheet to make it easier for customers to find the information.
We don't understand the decision making process and who gives permission.	We have made it clearer which staff members make decisions about pet requests.
The letter telling customers that they cannot have a pet is patronising.	We have changed the wording of the letter to make it sound less patronising.
Customers should have to pass their property inspection before being allowed to have a pet.	We have included that customers need to pass a property inspection before being allowed to have a pet.
The permission to have a pet letter doesn't explain how Selwood will remove pets.	We have expanded the policy to state that legal action could be in the form of an injunction or possession proceedings.





Pets and animals review report

Questions related to the policy

1. What do you think of the reasons for refusing permission? Do you think any should be removed or any reasons added?

Customer comments

- The reasons given seem fair.
- Case-by-case basis leads to inconsistencies.
- The fostering of animals should be allowed.
- Where do we stand on bees?

Selwood Housing's response

- It is necessary to work on a case-by-case basis because of the different types of properties, their features (e.g. size of garden), and different tenancy agreements.
- We do not allow the fostering of animals because we only allow pets on a permanent basis, and the type or breed of pet would always be changing.
- Bees are more of a hobby than pets and would need to be assessed based on the property and location. Because of the health and safety issues involved it is unlikely that permission would be given for bee keeping.

2. Is there anything you think ought to be added to the list of issues considered to be a nuisance?

Customer comments

- It makes sense and is easy to understand.
- There is no guidance on the size of animal.
- Dogs barking incessantly being labelled a nuisance needs to be looked at.

Selwood Housing's response

- The size of the animal and number will be looked at on a case-by-case basis due to the differences in properties and tenancy agreements.
- Dogs barking incessantly is a nuisance so the owner needs to resolve this; separation anxiety cannot be considered an excuse. Our guidance document gives a link to advice on the RSPCA website about what to do about dogs barking.



Pets and animals review report

Questions related to the guidance

3. Do you think there is anything missing from the list of conditions that might be attached to giving someone permission to have a pet?

Customer comments

- Want a list of reason for why you can't keep particular animals.
- Pet insurance should be on there.
- Clear and makes sense.
- Disagree that you must reapply for permission if your pet dies, and you buy a new one.

Selwood Housing's response

- There are many different tenancies agreements and therefore it would not be possible to provide a list as it would be too long. It is simpler to list the animals which aren't allowed in certain properties.
- We recommend in our guidance that customers take out pet insurance.
- We state that permission is needed for another pet because there could be changes to the pet (for example breed, size), property or individual circumstances, or the customer could have acquired the pet before the policy became effective.

4. What do you think of the wording of the letters in the appendices?

Appendix 1- "request for permission to have a pet"

Customer comments

- Clear and makes sense.
- It doesn't say anything about the decision-making process and which staff member/team signs it off.

Selwood Housing's response

- We have now indicated in the policy which staff are responsible.

Appendix 2- "Pets in flats" poster

Customer comments

- Clear and makes sense.
- This poster needs more promotion.



Pets and animals review report

Selwood Housing's response

- We will update the website to include the frequently asked question sheet to make it easier for customers to find the information.

Appendix 3- "permission to have a pet" letter

Customer comments

- Cats should be microchipped like dogs so that if there is a problem with a stray cat Selwood can check if it belongs to anyone.
- This letter doesn't explain how Selwood will remove pets.

Selwood Housing's response

- Stray animals are dealt with by the local authority and isn't Selwood's responsibility.
- We have expanded the policy to state that legal action could be in the form of an injunction or possession proceedings.

Appendix 4- "refusal for permission to have a pet"

Customer comments

- The letter sounds patronising.

Selwood Housing's response

- We have changed the wording of the letter by removing the first sentence to make it sound less patronising.

Do you like the frequently asked question factsheet format, or would you prefer to see this set out as advice under sections for the types of pets – e.g. a section on dogs, a section on cats, to make this easier for people to find the information they are looking for?

Customer comments

- 3 customers preferred the frequently asked question factsheet and 2 preferred having sections for each type of pet.

Selwood Housing's response

- We will stick with the frequently asked question sheet.



Pets and animals review report

5. Do you think permission for an existing customer to keep a pet should only be given subject to a satisfactory property inspection?

Customer comments

- Everyone agreed that permission to keep a pet should be given after a satisfactory property inspection.

Selwood Housing's response

- We have included a property inspection for existing customers into the policy as a requirement for granting permission for a customer to keep a pet.

Other comments

Customer: Hang up the pet policy in the sheltered housing buildings so that everyone can see it.

Selwood Housing: New customers of sheltered schemes are advised about what pets they can have in the property at the pre-tenancy interview. Information is also on our website.

Customer: Create a flow chart so customers can easily find out if they are allowed to keep a flat.

Selwood Housing: This would be a duplication of information already on the website and on the frequently asked questions sheet.

Customer: The policy and guidance are vague. After reading it it's still not completely clear.

Selwood Housing: The policy is much clearer now than it was as it now includes aspects of the guidance. It is not possible to always give exact answers due to the wide range of tenancy agreements and property features, e.g. difference sizes of garden.

Customer: permission is not given to small animals such as rabbits and guinea pigs.

Selwood Housing: Our reasons for not allowing certain caged animals in the property are in the policy. Some animals need a hutch and a run outside.

Customer: How do you enforce not burying your pet in the garden?



Pets and animals review report

Selwood Housing: We cannot practically enforce this, but it is advised for health, environmental reasons and lack of return access for the previous customer.