

PETS POLICY

31 March 2020

Prepared by:	Sara Mansell
Date effective from:	31/03/2020
Policy approved by:	Si Welch
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EIA Required?	<input type="checkbox"/>
EIA Completed?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Revision number:	4
Lead officer:	Jane Allen

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The aim of this Policy is to give clear guidance to customers and staff regarding the keeping of pets in properties (and within the garden boundary and communal areas) managed by Stockport Homes (SHG).

1.2 The Policy states SHG's approach to responsible pet ownership and has been developed with regard to good practice guidance from the RSPCA.

1.3 SHG defines a pet to be any animal kept by an SHG customer or kept within a SHG managed property, including the garden boundary and communal areas or SHG land.

2 STRATEGIC LINKS

2.1 This Policy links to the following:

- SHG Age Friendly Strategy
- SHG Tenancy Agreement
- SHG Anti-Social Behaviour Policy & Procedure
- SHG Estate Inspection & Customer Walkabout
- SHG Managing Tenancy Breaches
- SHG Eyes Wide Open Policy Statement
- Dangerous Wild Animal Act
- Animal Welfare Act
- Dangerous Dogs
- The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act
- The Control of Dogs Order

2.2 The 'Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England' sets out that Registered Providers shall 'offer tenancies or terms of occupation which are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the needs of individual households, the sustainability of the community, and the efficient use of their housing stock'. SHG recognises the benefit of allowing tenants to have pets. This is balanced against restrictions within certain property types, where having pets would not be suitable and could have a negative impact on other tenants as well as SHG's housing stock.

3 KEY FEATURES OF THE POLICY

3.1 SHG recognises that keeping pets can offer significant benefits to their owners, such as enhancing their wellbeing and quality of life. SHG will support this, whilst ensuring that any irresponsible pet or animal ownership or treatment is prevented or remedied appropriately.

3.2 Tenants in properties where pets are allowed, do not need to ask for permission unless they are requesting to have more than one cat or dog, as per their Tenancy Agreement.

3.3 Tenants of properties where there is a communal entrance are prevented from having pets without the written permission of SHG. The exception to this is caged or tank living animals, such as fish, birds or hamsters.

3.4 Any customer keeping a pet is responsible for any nuisance the pet may cause. Nuisance will be treated as anti-social behaviour (ASB) and SHG will take the appropriate action to remedy the behaviour promptly. Nuisance includes allowing any pet to roam, foul or cause disturbance on land managed by SHG or on neighbouring land.

3.5 No animals classed as 'dangerous' by The Dangerous Dogs Act or Dangerous Wild Animals Act will be permitted to be kept at an SHG property.

3.6 SHG will work in partnership with the Dog Warden Service at Stockport Council to provide help and advice to customers on effective pet management, delivering events which promote responsible pet ownership.

3.7 SHG will continue to review its approach to allowing pets in specific property types and will work with customers to provide properties that meet customer needs.

3.8 SHG may implement a local agreement to allow specific types of pets in a block of flats following a full consultation with the affected customer consultation (e.g. a sheltered scheme). The local agreement will be reviewed annually.

3.9 Working animals, i.e. Guide Dogs and Hearing Dogs, are not classed as pets and so will be permitted in any property even where an animal restriction is in place, upon receipt of a registered proof letter.

- For assistance dogs, customers should be asked to provide confirmation in writing stating their dog has been trained by an ADI (Assistance Dogs International) or IGDF (International Guide Dog Federation) accredited organisation.

3.10 **SHG will not permit Emotional Support Animals in any of its multi-storey flats.** Consideration for such animals in other types of properties will be assessed after receipt of supporting medical evidence of the customers need for such an animal, as well as evidence of the accreditation/certification of the scheme.

4 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

4.1 An equality impact assessment (EIA) screening form has been carried out and a full EIA is not required. Whilst the impact is low, SHG recognises that in exceptional circumstances (such as if the prospective customer has certain disabilities or other health issues) some customers may benefit from having a pet. This could be within a property that traditionally does not permit pets.

4.2 The policy permits for this and for the external changing financial environment (e.g. recent welfare reform changes leading to more customers needing to downsize and move into different property types).

4.3 Working animals, Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs, are not pets and will be permitted in any property type, on the provision of appropriate evidence by the customer.

5 OWNERSHIP, MONITORING & REVIEW

5.1 The policy is owned by the Head of Neighbourhoods and will be monitored by the Neighbourhood and Support Services Directorate Policy Review Group through the review schedule.

5.2 Any queries with the policy should be forwarded to the Policy Officer on 0161474 4151.