

PETS POLICY

1st March 2024

Prepared by:	Joanne Richardson
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Policy approved by:	OMT
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EIA Required?	<input type="checkbox"/>
EIA Completed?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Revision number:	5
Lead officer:	Rebecca Cullen

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 Neighbourhood Estate Inspection & Customer Walkabout
- SHG Tenancy Breaches
- SHG Eyes Wide Open Policy Statement
- Dangerous Dogs Act
- Dangerous Wild Animal Act
- Animal Welfare Act
- 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 need to ask for written permission unless they are requesting to home more than one cat or dog, as per their Tenancy Agreement.

3.3 Tenants who live in a multi-storey block of flats or flats with communal entrance are only permitted to keep caged or tank living animals such as fish or birds. Dogs or cats are not permitted unless assistance dogs i.e. Guide Dogs, Hearing Dogs with proof from a recognised organisation – see 3.9

3.4 Any tenant 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 1991 or Dangerous Wild Animals Act will be permitted to be kept at an SHG property. This includes new laws in relation to XL Bully dogs which has been added to the list of dangerous dogs. From the 1st February 2024, it will be a criminal offence to own an XL Bully dog unless it has an Certificate of Exemption.

3.6 **NO** dogs are permitted in any multi storey accommodation (unless they are officially accredited assistance dogs e.g. guide dogs). Legal action will be taken in respect of any reports of dogs kept without permission.

3.7 Please refer to the government website for further information '<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ban-on-xl-bully-dogs#:~:text=Female%20dogs%20must%20be%20spayed,or%20before%2030%20June%202024.>

3.8 To get a Certificate of Exemption you must:

- Get [third party public liability insurance](#) cover for your dog.
- Neuter your dog permanently if it is not already neutered. Read [Neutering an XL Bully](#) for when you must have your dog neutered. A vet must confirm if your dog is already neutered.
- [Pay the £92.40 fee for each dog you want to keep.](#) The fee is not refundable.
- The Government also provides useful information regarding identifying if a dog is an XL Bully breed: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/official-definition-of-an-xl-bully-dog/official-definition-of-an-xl-bully-dog>

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

3.10 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.

3.11 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.

3.12 Assistance animals, i.e. Guide Dogs and Hearing Dogs, will be permitted in any property even where an animal restriction is in place, upon receipt of a registered proof letter from

- ADI (Assistance Dogs International) or IGDF (International Guide Dog Federation) accredited organisation.

4 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

4.1 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 Assistance animals, Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs will be permitted in any property type, on the provision of appropriate evidence by the tenant.

5 OWNERSHIP, MONITORING & REVIEW

5.1 This Policy is owned by the Operations Directorate and will be monitored by the Operations Management Team.

5.2 The Policy will be reviewed in line with the Operations Management Policy and Procedure Review Schedule.