

Pet Policy

A Sovereign Network Homes Policy

December 2023

Important

Policies and procedures must be coordinated through the Business Development Team for compliance, auditing and control purposes. A Policy Registration Form must be completed before any revisions are made by contacting the Business Development Team at NH.Policy@networkhomes.org.uk

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Title: Pet Policy

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11/12/17	Transformation Director	1.1	3-year review and update on legislation
09/02/2021	Service Quality Manager	3	3-year review
12/10/2022	Service Quality Manager	3.1	Addition of form, amend to 2.2 reorganising the policy
20/12/2023	Service Quality Manager	3.2	Rebrand

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Appendices:

None

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out Sovereign Network Homes' approach to pet ownership for tenants and, leaseholders and shared owners. Network Home recognises that responsible pet ownership can have positive benefits on health and well being and provides support for individuals who have hearing problems and or are blind.
- 1.2 This needs to be balanced against the suitability of different property types to accommodate pets without this causing a nuisance to other customers.
- 1.3 We will always check a customers tenancy or lease agreement as well as determining whether we are the intermediate landlord before considering a customers pet request.
- 1.4 However, pets can cause problems particularly if they are not kept properly or are in unsuitable property.
- 1.5 This policy is intended to outline the conditions under which permission may be granted to keep a pet and the position we will take if these conditions are breached.

2. Aims and objective

- 2.1 This policy aims to:
 - Ensure measures are in place to encourage responsible pet ownership, whilst also providing a clear framework to ensure issues associated with pets are dealt with appropriately.
 - Ensure that a consistent approach is taken when dealing with requests to keep pets
 - Ensure that customers keeping a pet comply with the terms of their tenancy or lease.
 - Ensure complaints relating pets are dealt with efficiently and effectively
 - Signpost for advice and support where re-homing a pet is the most appropriate option

3. Policy statement

- 3.1 Sovereign Network Homes recognise the positive impact dog ownership can have on the health and general well-being of individuals as well as the support and assistance offered by hearing or guide dogs.
- 3.2 If a tenant, leaseholder or shared owner keeps a pet in breach of their lease tenancy agreement, a neighbourhood, older persons or leasehold officer will request that the pet is re-housed within 28 working days. If after 28 days no action has been taken to re-house the pet, we will take further action, and this can include legal enforcement against you..
- 3.3 Where a pet needs rehoming we will encourage customers to approach other organisations, which may be able to help, such as welfare groups or the local authority animal warden service. However, we make take further action against the tenant using our Antisocial Behaviour Policy.

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- 3.4 It is our policy to avoid situations where nuisance may arise from animal ownership and to take steps to remedy this if necessary.

4.0 Requests to keep pets

- 4.1 Where Sovereign Network Homes is the freeholder, we will consider giving permission to service animals and possibly therapy dogs providing the tenancy or lease agreement allow us to do so. Where we receive request for these types of dogs then we will require evidence from doctors and/or support workers.

- 4.1 If a resident wants to keep any pet they should always check their tenancy or lease agreement first, to check they are allowed to. The tenant, leaseholder or shared owner must apply in writing by completing the pet application form for permission to keep any pet in one of our properties. A new application should be made for each pet. Having, checked the tenancy or lease agreement then the number and type of pets granted will be determined by the size and location of the property.

- 4.2 Once an application is received then the responsible officer reviews the application, and reviews the lease or tenancy agreement. Before granting permission we will consider the size of the property and its location before considering whether we can grant permission

- 4.3 Where Sovereign Network Homes is the Intermediate Landlord we will be bound by the terms of the Head Lease and it may not be possible to give consent even where evidence is provided. We will always contact the Freeholder to discuss the request but the decision to grant / refuse permission ultimately sits with them.

- 4.4 However, permission may not be granted if you have a history of animal nuisance or if the property is not suitable for the animal, such as a large dog in a small flat.

- 4.5 Under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 you are not permitted to keep the following types of dog, unless a Certificate of Exemption has been obtained: Pit Bull Terrier, Japanese Tosa, Dogo Argentino, Fila Brasileiro, XL Bully, or any subsequent dog which is added.

- 4.6 Animals are not allowed to be kept for breeding purposes. If any animal does reproduce, then the new animal/animals would need to be rehomed within a

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maximum of 12 weeks. A warning notice will be served, which could put the tenancy or lease at risk if there are further litters.

- 4.7 The tenant is not allowed to keep livestock, wild animals or endangered ` species under any circumstances.

5.0 Once Permission has been granted

- 5.1 Once permission is granted then by law the dog should be micro chipped and when in public dogs must wear a collar with the name and address including postcode of its owner.
- 5.2 The the tenant, leaseholder or shared owner are responsible for taking care of their pet and or ensuring it does not foul, cause a nuisance or cause damage to the property, communal parts of the building, neighbouring property or the local environment. Where a resident does not clear up after their dog then this will be managed through our Antisocial Behaviour Policy and may result in enforcement action being taken.
- 5.3 Customers are responsible for any pet that they own, look after or that visits the property.
- 5.4 Dogs must be kept on a a lead in communal areas and must not enter children's play areas.
- 5.5 Where a pet is causing a nuisance then we may ask for it to be removed within 28 days or take legal action against the resident.

6 Retrospective Permission

In rare circumstances and following authorisation from their line manager the Neighbourhood Scheme or Leasehold Officer may authorise the keeping of pets. This may include:

- Where customers are being rehoused in our property as part of development of their existing homes
- Where we discover that a pet is being kept without our previous knowledge, we may give permission retrospectively, if other conditions for keeping a pet can be met.

Where a pet is kept in a situation where we would not give permission, we may ask for it to be removed within 28 days or take legal action against the resident.

7. Roles and responsibilities

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- 7.1 Heads of Service, Team Managers, Neighbourhood, Leasehold and Sheltered Scheme Managers are responsible for either requesting or considering requests to keep pets are responsible for this Policy.

8 Complaints

Any tenant who is dissatisfied with how we have managed pet request is able to submit a complaint using our Complaints process. Once our Complaints policy is complete and if they remain dissatisfied then they can contact the Housing Ombudsman.

9 Performance monitoring

We will monitor the impact of this policy to ensure appropriate and consistent application using the following reports:

- Number of pet applications refused
- Number of pet applications approved
- Number of enforcement actions taken due to nuisance pets

10. Related documents

- Antisocial Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- ASB Toolkit

11. Legislation and regulation

- Animal Welfare Act 2006
- Dangerous Dogs Act 1991
- Control of Dogs Act 1992
- Equality Act 2010
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Tenancy Agreement
- Regulator of Social Housing Regulatory Framework
- Antisocial Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014

12. Equality and diversity

- 12.1 We will apply this policy consistently and fairly and will not discriminate against anyone based on any relevant characteristics, including those set out in the Equality Act 2010.

- 12.2 We understand that animals may provide companionship and security to people. This is the case for certain protected groups that may be subject to victimisation or harassment. People who have a physical, sensory, mental or psychological disability

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may benefit from a support animal and such needs will be considered when permission is being considered.

13. Review

All policies should be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum, or sooner if there is a specific legislative, regulatory or service requirement or change in guidance, law or practice.

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