

## Keeping Pets Policy



### Document Control

|                                 |   |   |    |  |
|---------------------------------|---|---|----|--|
| Responsible Person              | Operations Director                                   |   |    |  |
| Review Frequency                | 5 Yearly  |   |    |  |
| Reviewed by                     | Board   |   |    |  |
| Date Approved                   | October 2023  |   |    |  |
| Next Review Due                 | October 2028 (in line with Housing Services Handbook) |   |    |  |
| Consultation Required           | Yes   | ✓ | No |  |
| Equalities Impact Assessment    | Yes   | ✓ | No |  |
| Added to Company Website        | Yes   | ✓ | No |  |
| Associated Documents Considered | Yes   | ✓ | No |  |

## **1. Scope of Policy**

- 1.1. Waverley Housing recognises that some of its tenants may, from time to time, wish to keep pets. This policy has been established to set a framework within which tenants may keep certain pets while at the same time protecting the rights of others to the peaceful enjoyment of their homes by ensuring that the keeping of pets neither causes nuisance, however defined, to other tenants or the neighbourhood in general, nor causes damage to any property owned by Waverley Housing.

## **2. Objective of Policy**

- 2.1. The objective of the Policy is to provide tenants and staff with a clear framework within which requests by tenants to keep pets and the arrangements to apply when tenants keep pets are set out.

## **3. Implementation of Policy**

- 3.1. For the purpose of this policy a pet is defined as being either:
  - a) domestic animal (e.g. dog or cats).
  - b) cage birds (e.g. budgerigar, canary, parakeet etc.).
  - c) tank fish (e.g. goldfish, tropical fish etc.). If a tenant wishes to keep pond fish, permission to install a pond is required in the 1<sup>st</sup> instance.
  - d) small tame rodent which has been expressly bred as a pet (e.g. domestic guinea pig, hamster, rat etc.).
  - e) Reptile e.g. snake or lizard providing they are housed securely.
  - f) Insects such as spiders or stick insects providing they are housed securely.
- 3.2. Permission to keep any other category of pet will be at the sole discretion of Waverley Housing. Permission will not be granted for keeping livestock, game-birds, birds of prey, poultry, racing pigeons or show pigeons.
- 3.3. Waverley Housing reserves the right to add to or remove from the above any category of pet. Tenants who own pets are expected to ensure that the animal is well cared for and kept under proper control both inside and outside the property. Depending on the issue, the Company may work with other agencies in relation to issues of pet management e.g. the Police, Dog Warden, Environmental Health Department and animal protection organisations such as the SSPCA.
- 3.4. Any other recognised assistance animal shall be an exception to this policy where permission to keep such an animal shall be taken as having been granted automatically without the requirement for a formal written application to be made.

## **4. Conditions**

- 4.1. New tenants will be advised at sign up of our Pets Policy and where they currently have pets they will be informed of any permissions they may require. New tenants with no pets will still be informed of the permissions they require should they wish to obtain pets in the future.

- 4.2. Tenants may, subject to certain conditions, keep a domestic pet but before doing so must obtain our express permission which will be given in writing.
- 4.3. Permission to keep a reasonable number of cage birds, fish tank, hamsters/guinea pigs and similar small animals will be covered by a general consent and written permission will not be required.
- 4.4. The maximum number of pets allowed in any property shall be limited to two unless our express permission has been granted to allow more than two. Such permission will be solely at the discretion of Waverley Housing and will take account of the category of pet, size of property etc. Each such application will be treated individually and where permission is granted shall not be deemed to have set a precedent or variation to this policy.
- 4.5. Tenants who do not own a pet in their own right but are asked to look after one for a period of time exceeding one month by a relative, neighbour or friend must also get our permission to do so. Regular weekly access to look after pets must also receive our permission.
- 4.6. Where permission is given, it will be subject to the following general conditions:
  - a) Permission will not be granted to keep any dog prohibited under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 or any amendments to this Act, or by any other law.
  - b) Tenants are fully responsible for any pets owned by them or belonging to anyone living with them or being looked after by them.
  - c) Tenants must take all reasonable steps to supervise and keep such pets under proper control.
  - d) Tenants must take all reasonable steps to prevent any pets causing nuisance, annoyance or danger to neighbours or anyone in the neighbourhood.
  - e) Tenants must take reasonable care to ensure that pets do not cause damage to the house, neighbours property, anything belonging to us or anything we are responsible for such as common parts.
- 4.7. Where tenants are permitted to keep pets and we have reasonable grounds to believe that they are being maltreated, regardless of whether they are causing a nuisance or not, the tenant will be reported to the SSPCA.
- 4.8. Waverley Housing reserves the right to revoke any permission and request the removal of a pet where the pet is found to be causing nuisance or damage, for which they will be recharged. The tenant will be required to make alternative arrangements for the pet.
- 4.9. Pet owners are responsible for cleaning up pet faeces and disposing of them in designated bins and must take reasonable care to see that pets do not foul the house, neighbours' property or any common/public areas.
- 4.10. Tenants are not permitted to keep pets for the purposes of breeding regardless of whether breeding would be for commercial gain or not.
- 4.11. Where the number of pets exceeds that for which permission has been given Waverley Housing reserve the right to have the tenant make alternative

arrangements for removal/re-homing of the additional pets and will allow a reasonable time not to exceed 3 months for this purpose.

- 4.12. Tenants are not allowed to keep animals or birds in any external structure in their garden, stairwells, or on any ground belonging to us such as kennels, huts, hutches, aviaries etc. without our express permission in writing. Permission is also required before erecting any such structure. Where such permissions have been granted Waverley Housing may revoke these where either the structure and/or the pets are found to be causing nuisance.
- 4.13. Where there are disputes regarding the conduct or nuisance of pets/animals Waverley Housing will enforce the conditions of the tenancy agreement. This will involve investigating the matter and considering the most appropriate action to take e.g., warning to the tenant who owns the pet, requesting that the tenant rehomes the pet, reporting the matter to the police and as a last resort taking legal action to terminate the tenancy.
- 4.14. Tenants may be required to make reasonable arrangements for dogs to be isolated to a particular room or kept under proper control when members of our staff or agents including workmen, contractors etc. are required to enter the property through the normal course of business. Where such arrangements cannot be made this might delay the completion of repairs or improvements and shall not be subject to compensation for service failure.

## **5. Responsibilities**

- 5.1. The main responsibility for the day-to-day operation of this policy lies with housing staff with oversight from the Housing Services Manager. Any legal action being considered in relation to any problems caused by tenants' pets will need to be authorised by the Head of Housing.

## **6. Reporting and Monitoring**

- 6.1. Any problems caused by tenants pets are recorded through our estate management procedures, which includes details of the actions taken to deal with such problems. These problems and actions are regularly reported to the Management Team where any trends or further actions required can be evaluated.

## **7. Equal Opportunities**

- 7.1. Waverley Housing shall apply this policy in accordance with its Equality & Diversity Policy. This means that in the application of this policy, we will not discriminate on the grounds of a person's race, religion or belief, gender re-assignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sex, sexual orientation, age or disability.
- 7.2. Copies of this policy are available on request free of charge from Waverley Housing's office at 51 North Bridge Street, Hawick, TD9 9PX. Copies of this policy will also be made available within a reasonable time, upon request, in a language other than English, or in a format to suit visually impaired persons. The policy is also available on our website [www.waverley-housing.co.uk](http://www.waverley-housing.co.uk).