

Pet Policy

Housing Management Policy 15

Keniston Housing Association

Introduction

This policy sets out our approach to dealing with pets. We recognise the mental and physical health benefits that come with pet ownership. However, we will take action if pet owners fail to uphold the standards set out in this policy, or if pets have an unintended negative impact on other residents and the community.

This policy applies to all residents who live in properties owned or managed by Keniston Housing Association.

Definitions

Animal hoarding- keeping large numbers of animals without having the ability to properly care for them.

Assistance animals - an animal, usually domesticated, that lives with a disabled person and is trained to perform tasks. Those are a guide or service dogs, or they may be animals trained strictly to perform a job.

Pet - any domesticated or tamed animal that is kept as a companion.

Roaming- a dog that is wandering off its property and unattended.

Pet nuisance - this includes, but is not limited to:

- Roaming animals.
- Fouling in communal areas and gardens and not cleaning after the dog.
- Uncontrolled behaviour, such as excessive barking or aggressive behaviour.
- Lack of care and attention causing foul odours.

Permission to keep pets

We allow residents to keep pets in line with this policy and the conditions set out in their tenancy or lease agreement. Residents must have written permission from us to keep a pet on either a permanent or temporary basis.

Any existing pets will be considered when deciding whether to grant permission for subsequent pets.

Requests for permission to keep a pet are considered and responded to within 28 days of the request being received.

All reasonable requests will be granted permission provided:

- We are satisfied you will be able to meet the welfare needs of the pet in your home.
- The lease agreement does not prohibit the resident from keeping a pet. Where there is a prohibition, this is extended to tenants at the same estate.

You do not need permission for:

- Fish.
- Non-venomous reptiles and spiders.
- Rodents.
- Indoor caged birds.

Exclusions

Permission will not be granted for:

- Farm animals and livestock.
- Venomous insects, spiders, snakes and reptiles and any other animals listed under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976.
- Dangerous Dogs – as specified under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1994 and its extension in 2014. Any breaches of the above conditions will result in legal action against the resident unless the dog has been exempted from the prohibition and the terms of the exemption are fully complied with, including being registered on the Index of Exempted dogs.
- Where there are already on-going problems with pet ownership or have been in the past. These will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- The number of dogs and cats will be taken into consideration when granting permission to prevent animal hoarding.
- Aviaries.
- Running a business such as breeding animals, or operating boarding kennels from a property.
- Horses and donkeys.
- Bees.

Permitted Pets

We will always grant permission to keep trained assistance dogs, including guide dogs and those to assist the deaf.

Where a resident chooses to keep a pet, whether on permanent or temporary basis, they must fulfil the following conditions:

- Ensure that the needs of the animal(s) are met. Animals' needs as defined by the Animal Welfare Act 2006 include the need for suitable environment, suitable diet, ability for the pet to exhibit normal behaviour patterns, any need to be housed with or apart from other animals and its need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.
- Residents should take steps to ensure their pets are identifiable.
- Animals must not be left unattended for a period of time which could result in inability to meet the animals' welfare needs.
- All animals must be kept in proper care and control and must not cause a nuisance to other residents/neighbours.
- Animals must not be allowed to foul in communal areas inside the building. In all cases any fouling must be cleared up immediately by the pet's owner.
- Animals must not damage any Keniston property, both indoors and outdoors. We will charge the resident to repair any damage caused and consider withdrawing permission.
- Residents are responsible for ensuring their garden is secure.
- Dogs must be kept on a lead in communal areas and under control and must not enter children's play areas.
- Pet owners must consider registering their pet with a local veterinary practice and taking out a pet insurance to help meet any costs of medical attention. Low-cost vet care options are available through animal charities for pet owners on low incomes.

Where a resident is looking after a pet for a friend or a family member, all the above requirements must apply. They also apply if you have friends of family visiting your home with their pet.

Property size/type	Number of pets
Studio/1 bed flats	One dog or cat
2/3 bed flats	One dog or cat
2/3 bed houses	Two dogs and two cats
4 bed plus houses	Two dogs and two cats

When choosing a dog, residents should consider whether their chosen breed is suitable for the size of their property.

Complaints about pets

Complaints about pets fall into two categories:

- Complaints about pets being kept where they are not permitted.
- Complaints about nuisance being caused by the pet.

Both complaints constitute a breach of tenancy. On receiving a complaint about a pet kept without permission, or where we know that that's the case, we will investigate and consider providing retrospective consent.

We retain the right to withdraw permission to keep a pet where the pet has caused nuisance, or we believe the owner is showing signs of committing animal cruelty or neglect.

If we do not provide consent, or withdraw our consent, we will ask the customer to re-home the pet within 28 days.

If the resident fails to re-home the pet, we may take legal action to resolve the issue.

Where a complaint is made about a pet causing a nuisance (such as not cleaning up after a dog), we will investigate the complaint in line with our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

In the majority of cases, we aim to resolve the situation informally and by agreement. Where this is not possible, we will consider a range of options for resolving the problem including:

- Withdrawing permission to keep the animal.
- Restricting the number of animals.
- Liaising with the local authority's Environmental Health department and/or Dog Warden.
- Making responsible pet ownership part of an Acceptable Behaviour Contract. This may stipulate that the owner must investigate any behavioural concerns (such as excessive barking) with a registered vet.
- Serving an injunction to oblige the owner to start or stop taking certain actions, or to remove the animal.

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- Terminating the tenancy and taking possession proceedings where tenancy conditions are breached.

All instances of animal cruelty will be reported to the RSPCA.

Any complaint received regarding a suspected banned breed of dog under the Dangerous Dogs Act will be reported to the local Safer Neighbourhoods Team, who can arrange for the dog to be identified.

Where the nuisance has caused threat or injury to a member of staff, the staff member will record the incident in the accident book.

Home visits

Residents must keep their pet under control inside the property while any member of Keniston staff or its contractors are at the property. Residents may also be asked to put any pets in a different room for the duration of the visit.

Where a resident's pet(s) attacks a staff member or a contractor, we will withdraw consent, report to the police and/or take any of the actions highlighted in the 'Complaints about nuisance being caused by the pet' section above.

Other considerations

Animal Hoarding

Where customers are found to be hoarding animals, we will involve all relevant agencies such as Social Services and the RSPCA as appropriate.

Cat flaps

Residents must request permission to install a cat flap. Permission to install a cat flap will not be granted if it compromises the fire safety or security of the door.

Identification

By law, dogs must wear a collar with their owner's name and address on it when in a public place and be microchipped and their details registered on an authorised database.

Cats should also wear a collar so they can be identified. It is also a good practice to microchip cats.

Vaccination

All pets where applicable must be vaccinated and regularly treated for fleas and worms. Residents may be required to provide evidence of this from their veterinary practitioner.

Pet death

If a pet dies, you must dispose of its body in a responsible and safe way. You must not bury cats or dogs on Keniston-owned land, including your garden.

Legislation, regulation, and external links

Animal Welfare Act 2006: The welfare of all animals is protected by the Animal Welfare Act 2006 which makes it an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to any animal. The Act also contains a duty of care to animals - anyone responsible for an animal must take reasonable steps to make sure the animal's welfare needs are met.

Anti-social behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014: A constable or an officer of a local authority authorised by it can exercise the powers conferred by this subsection and may seize any dog in a place in England or Wales which is not a public place, if the dog appears to the constable or officer to be dangerously out of control.

Care Act 2014

Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005: The Act provides local authorities with more effective powers to tackle poor environmental quality and anti-social behaviour. In particular the Act includes sections on nuisance and noise and dogs.

Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 and it's extension in 2014

Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976

Environmental Protection Act 1990: The Act refers to incidents involving noise, fouling and smells. Contacting the local authority Dog Warden Service, who have responsibility to ensure animal health and welfare.

Equality Act 2010: The Equality Act 2010 prohibits service providers, from discriminating against those who need an assistance dog with them.

The Control of Dogs Order 1992: The order states that every dog while in a highway or in a place of public resort shall wear a collar with the name and address of the owner inscribed on the collar or on a plate or badge attached to it.

The Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015: The Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015 required that from 6 April 2016, every dog that is older than eight weeks must be microchipped, and their details recorded on an approved UK database. If you buy or rehome a dog, or if you change your address, you must also update your details on the database.

The Microchipping of Cats and Dogs (England) Regulations 2023: This amends the above legislation to encompass cats. From 10 June 2024, every cat must be microchipped before the age of 20 weeks, and their details recorded on an approved UK database.

This was agreed by **Management team on 19th September 2023**

Review date: September 2026