



Pets policy

Approved by: Executive Committee

Approval date: 18 May 2026

Next review date: 2029

Applies to: RHP (Association)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Our tenancy agreements and leases allow customers to keep certain types of pets under certain conditions. This policy sets out our overall approach to customers keeping pets. It explains the types of pets that are permitted, the conditions attached to keeping pets in our homes, and how we will deal with unauthorised pets and other issues related to pet ownership.
- 1.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with our:
 - ▶ Improving and Maintaining Neighbourhoods Policy
 - ▶ Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
 - ▶ Complaints Policy
 - ▶ Hoarding Policy
- 1.3 This policy applies to all households living in properties owned or managed by RHP, including general needs, retirement housing, market rents, keyworker housing, leasehold and shared ownership. It applies to all customers: tenants, homeowners (leaseholders and shared owners) and licence holders.
- 1.4 To ensure clarity and accessibility, this policy will be published on our website and made available in alternative formats on request. The policy applies to RHP only.

2. LEGISLATION AND REGULATION

- 2.1 This policy has been written in line with current legislation and regulation. This includes but may not be limited to:
 - ▶ Animal Welfare Act 2006
 - ▶ Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
 - ▶ Dangerous Dogs Act 1991
 - ▶ Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
 - ▶ Environmental Protection Act 1990
 - ▶ Control of Dogs Order 1992
 - ▶ Equality Act 2010
 - ▶ The Microchipping of Cats and Dogs (England) Regulations 2023
 - ▶ Exotic Disease (Amendment) (England) Order 2024

3. OUR APPROACH

- 3.1 In general, customers do not need our permission to keep a reasonable number of pets, and we recognise the mental and physical health benefits that can 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 a negative impact on other customers or the community. We do require written permission to keep a dog.

4. PERMISSION TO KEEP A PET

- 4.1 Customers do not need to seek permission to keep the following pets:
- ▶ Up to 1 cat.
 - ▶ A reasonable number of small mammals and/or caged animals such as hamsters and gerbils.
 - ▶ Indoor fish.
- 4.2 Customers wishing to keep any additional pets above those permitted as standard must seek written permission from RHP. This includes customers moving into an RHP property via transfer, rehousing or mutual exchange.
- 4.3 Customers should seek written permission from us if they wish to keep a dog. We will consider the circumstances of the household and nature of the property when reviewing these cases and inform customers of our decision. If we refuse the request, we will clearly set out the reasons why.
- 4.4 All dogs need to be microchipped, licenced where required and have valid pet liability insurance.
- 4.5 Trained assistance dogs, including guide dogs and those to assist the deaf, are allowed in all circumstances. The dog will need to be certified as an assistance dog. Where the dog is considered a support dog, those that are classed as a dangerous breed will not be considered as a support dog irrespective of any medical or other certification to support the request. The owner will need to demonstrate that they have control of the dog as part of any assessment.
- 4.6 In all circumstances we will require sight of certification for assistance or support animals.
- 4.7 We will not grant permission to any household to keep the following as pets:
- ▶ Animals listed under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 (including large mammals, carnivores, larger or venomous reptiles, dangerous spiders and scorpions)
 - ▶ Any endangered species
 - ▶ Any hybrid between a domestic and wild animal
 - ▶ Bees or dangerous insects
 - ▶ Livestock (including poultry, horses, goats and cattle)
 - ▶ Dogs listed under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 (e.g. XL bully, pit bull Terrier, Japanese Tosa, Dogo Argentino or Fila Brasileiro) with the exception of dogs registered on the Index of Exempted Dogs that have undergone an assessment to determine that they are safe and where the owner is compliant with additional conditions

Process for requesting permission

- 4.8 Customers must submit a written request via our online form, email, or by contacting RHP. Requests should include:
- ▶ Type, breed, size and age of the animal
 - ▶ Number of animals
 - ▶ Details of care and welfare arrangements
- 4.9 We will acknowledge all requests and aim to provide a decision within 10 working days. Where consent from a superior landlord is required, this timeframe may be extended; customers will be informed of the revised timescale.

Factors considered when assessing a request

4.10 We will consider:

- ▶ Whether the tenancy agreement or any superior lease permits pets
- ▶ suitability of the property (size, layout, shared access, outdoor space)
- ▶ Type, size and number of animals
- ▶ Potential impact on neighbours or the wider community
- ▶ Welfare needs of the animal and the customer's ability to meet them

Decision-making and communication

4.11 All decisions will be confirmed in writing.

4.12 If a request is refused, we will clearly explain the reasons and signpost the customer to the relevant review or complaints process.

Handling pet-related issues

4.13 We will work with customers to address pet-related issues and may refer them to specialist animal welfare organisations.

4.14 Where a pet owner fails to engage or where nuisance, cruelty or neglect is significant, we may take enforcement action. This may include:

- ▶ Contacting Environmental Health
- ▶ Referring to the local authority or police
- ▶ Requiring rehoming of the animal
- ▶ Seeking possession of the property

4.15 Where rehoming is required, customers will normally have up to 30 days to comply, with extensions considered on request.

4.16 We will report:

- ▶ Dangerous dog incidents to the police
- ▶ Animal cruelty to the RSPCA
- ▶ Stray or abandoned animals to the local authority

4.17 We will investigate nuisance or anti-social behaviour relating to the management of pets in the home in line with our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

Responsibilities for pet owners

4.19 Customers are responsible for the health and welfare of their pets as detailed in the Animal Health and Welfare Act 2006.

4.20 In line with our Improving and Maintaining Neighbour and Anti-Social Behaviour policies, we expect all pet owners to:

- ▶ Care for the pets responsibly. This includes not subjecting them to abuse, providing a suitable home for the type of pet and not leaving them unattended for a significant amount of time.

- ▶ Keep pets under control and supervised and not cause a nuisance to other households. This includes dogs being kept on a lead in communal areas and not entering children's play areas.
- ▶ Clean up any fouling in the communal areas immediately.
- ▶ Make a conscious effort to stop unpleasant smells being released from their home due to their pets.
- ▶ Ensure dogs older than eight weeks old are microchipped and insured .
- ▶ Have suitable care arrangements in place for their pet if they are going to be absent for long periods.
- ▶ If the pet dies, bury or dispose of its body in a responsible and safe way. Pets should not be buried in communal gardens.

4.20.1 For the safety of our employees or contractors that attend a property, dogs must be secured in a separate room. If an employee feels unsafe and the request is not complied with, we will record that we were unable to access the property.

4.21 Customers are responsible for any damage caused to any of our or other customers' property or belongings by their pet. Failure to keep to these conditions may result in us withdrawing our permission and pet owners may be recharged for any repairs which are needed if damage is caused.

4.22 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 animal cruelty or neglect.

4.23 Examples of pet-related nuisance include:

- ▶ Fouling in communal areas
- ▶ Excessive noise
- ▶ Attacks on people or other animals
- ▶ Causing a person to believe they might be injured due to an out-of-control pet
- ▶ Failing to keep a dog on a lead in communal areas

4.24 Animals must not be kept for the purposes of breeding or sale.

4.25 All customers, whether living in a flat or house should not attempt to install a cat or dog flap without our prior consent as these can compromise the fire safety of the door.

4.26 We expect households to uphold the same standards for any animals visiting their property.

Pets in Retirement Housing

4.27 Customers in retirement housing must seek permission from the Scheme Manager or Housing Advisor to keep a pet.

4.27.1 Dogs will not be accepted unless they are a support dog

4.28 In regards to other types of animals, we will generally restrict permission to one pet per customer unless there are exceptional circumstances for incoming customers.

4.29 We will make a decision on a case-by-case basis and the below factors will be taken into account:

- ▶ The type and nature of the retirement scheme

- ▶ Whether the customer's home has direct access to the outside without having to take the pet through the communal building
- ▶ The customer's ability to care for the pet
- ▶ The nature of arrangements for taking care of the pet in the event of a change of circumstance, such as hospital stay, move to another accommodation or a decline in health and wellbeing
- ▶ Any potential impact the animal may have on others or the environment within the scheme.

4.30 If a customer is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may appeal to the relevant Retirement Housing Manager or Housing Services Manager.