



A Guide to Keeping pets in your Impact home

Impact recognises that many people get a great deal of pleasure from keeping pets as they provide company, help combat loneliness and often encourage exercise.

We are happy for you to keep pets where you have the facilities to look after them properly. (To be able to keep certain types of pets e.g. dogs you must have direct access to your own securely enclosed garden or yard.)

Irresponsible pet ownership can cause suffering to animals, damage to property and nuisance to neighbours. So we must include rules to control pet ownership in the tenancy agreement.

There are laws to make sure that if you keep a pet you care for it properly. This means making sure the pet has a suitable place to live, is given the right food to eat and is protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

Any tenant neglecting or abusing their pet will be reported to the RSPCA or the Police. To find out more about the Animal Welfare Act 2006 visit www.defra.gov.uk

What your tenancy agreement says about keeping pets and animals

- If you live in a house, bungalow or ground-floor flat with access to your own securely enclosed (private) garden or yard you can keep one dog (not a dog defined as dangerous by the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, or other relevant law), or one domestic cat, without asking for our consent, on the terms set out below.
- If you live in any other type of property you must get our consent to keep either a dog or a cat. You will need to complete the appropriate application form available from the local housing office or downloadable from our website:

www.impacthousing.org.uk

- If you ask for our consent to keep more than one dog or one cat (or one of each) we will judge each request on its own merits. This means we will consider such things as the type of home you live in and the size of your garden, as well as the breed, size and number of pets you want to keep. We would not normally give consent to keep more than two dogs or two cats or one dog and one cat. If you have other pets as

well as a dog or a cat, we will not normally give consent for more than a total of 3 pets.

- If you live in one of our extra care/sheltered housing schemes, you are not allowed to keep any cat or dog, unless it is a registered guide or hearing dog.

You are not allowed to keep any dangerous dog, as defined by the Dangerous Dog Act 1991, or other relevant law.

- A small number (maximum of 3) of smaller pets may be kept without permission such as rodents or other small caged animals, small birds kept in a cage, tanked fish and non-venomous insects, subject to the requirements detailed below (Keeping Small Animals).
- You are not allowed to keep in your home, garden, yard or any shared communal area any animals (including cats, dogs, farm livestock, reptiles, insects or birds) that, in our opinion, may cause nuisance, disturbance or intimidation to anyone in the local area, including our employees and contractors.
- You will not be given permission to keep livestock such as horses, donkeys, goats, pigs, ducks, geese, chickens or any reptiles (excluding tortoises) in your home or on any land owned by us.
- You must not allow any animals that you keep to foul any shared areas of your property or on roads, footpaths or play areas in the local areas.
- Any droppings deposited in public areas or your own garden or yard must be cleaned up immediately. You must remove and dispose of any pet droppings hygienically in strong sealed plastic bags.
- You must not keep any animal that is prohibited by law (Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976)
- Whether or not you have our written permission to keep an animal, you must make sure that no animal you keep causes a nuisance or annoyance to others or damages our property.

Factors we consider when you ask permission to keep a pet or pets

- The type of property you live in and the facilities available to you.
- The size of your garden or whether you have suitable open space nearby.
- The breed, size, number and temperament of the pets you are asking permission to keep.
- Whether the pet(s) will have special needs.

In flats:

- Whether the number of pets you want to keep is appropriate to the size of the flat and the facilities available. (We usually grant permission to keep dogs and cats in flats only if they have direct access to a securely enclosed garden or yard).
- Whether you can promise that your pet(s) will get enough exercise, with good access to a safe and suitable exercise area outside the home and not including shared communal/garden areas..
- No exotic animals or farm animals are allowed to be kept.

Also:

In all cases where we grant permission to keep a pet, this is on condition that the owner looks after it well. In the case of cats and dogs this includes not neglecting or mistreating the pet (e.g. leaving alone in the property for long periods of time, not meeting its basic needs, not hitting or punishing excessively, feeding properly etc.), and worming and regular flea treatment. In the case of dogs only, this also includes providing sufficient exercise.

Keeping dogs (please see our leaflet “Keeping dogs in your Impact home”)

- Usually we only consent to dogs being kept in accommodation with direct access to a securely enclosed, non-communal outside space.
- We encourage you to have your dog permanently identified by microchip or tattoo.
- In most cases we will allow you to replace your dog as long as your home is suitable.
- Anyone mistreating or neglecting their dog will be refused permission to keep ANY pet and will be reported to the RSPCA.
- You must keep your dog under control at all times and make sure it does not cause a nuisance or distress to others. Nuisance includes but is not limited to bad smells, noise, fouling, aggressive behaviour and straying unattended.
- You must ensure that any dog you keep is kept on a lead whilst in shared areas, communal open spaces or parking areas. You must not exercise dogs in these types of communal spaces – you must walk them away from the scheme.
- If your dog is in a public place the law says that it must wear a collar and tag with the name and address of the owner inscribed on it. (Control of Dogs order 1992).
- Your visitors must obey these rules if they bring a dog with them to your home.

You must never:

- keep any breed of dog banned under the 1991 Dangerous Dogs Act or any other UK legislation;

- breed or board dogs on our property;
- keep dogs on balconies or in communal walkways;
- chain or tether dogs on any Impact owned land;
- leave your dog alone or unattended overnight or for long periods of time.
- You must never allow your dog to urinate or foul inside your property.

Keeping cats

- Usually we only allow cats to be kept in accommodation with direct access to an outside space.
- We encourage you to have your cat permanently identified.
- You must not let your cat breed.
- Anyone mistreating or neglecting their cat will be refused permission to keep ANY pet and will be reported to the RSPCA or Police.
- You must keep your cats under control at all times and make sure they cause no nuisance or distress to others.
- You must empty any litter trays at least daily and dispose of the contents hygienically in a strong sealed plastic bag.

You must never:

- breed or board cats in our property;
- keep cats on balconies or in communal walkways.

Keeping small animals

- In the case of very small animals such as rats, mice, gerbils and hamsters, you must limit them to manageable numbers (no more than 3) and make sure they are suitable for their living conditions.
- In the case of rabbits and guinea pigs, you should normally keep them outside the home. You must have access to your own enclosed garden or yard where you can put a secure exercise run away from prolonged direct sunlight and safe from predators.
- You must avoid letting your pets breed by keeping same-sex or neutered animals.
- You must keep their home free from excess droppings.

Keeping caged birds

- You can keep small caged birds in the home provided their cage is large enough to allow them to spread their wings fully in any direction and they have enough space to perch.
- Ideally you should also let them exercise outside the cage, provided they can't escape.
- You must keep their home free from excess droppings.

Keeping aviary birds outside

- You must show you have adequate outside facilities for the birds and that you can look after them properly
- You must show how you will prevent potential nuisance to people living nearby, for example early morning noise, or rodent infestation.

Feeding Wild Birds

- Rats are a problem in many areas and as a result you are not allowed to put on the ground any seeds, bread or other foods for wild birds.
- You are allowed to feed wild birds so long as you use a feeder that does not allow items to fall to the floor.
- You will have to stop feeding wild birds if they become a nuisance because of noise, their numbers or their droppings - especially on walkways, car parking areas or clothes drying facilities.

Special circumstances

If unique or exceptional circumstances suggest we should depart from our normal rules, we will consider the application on its merits.

Nuisance and enforcement

If a neighbour's pet causes nuisance to you, or you think it is not being well cared for, you should report your concerns to your Neighbourhood Coordinator. However, if you think a pet is being deliberately mistreated, you should first report your concerns to the RSPCA or the Police.

Making a complaint

We will acknowledge your complaint in writing and deal with it under our Contact Management System.

The following section sets out the action we will take against any tenant who:

- has not got our permission to keep their pet or pets; or
- has our permission, but does not look after their pet or pets properly; or
- has let their pet cause nuisance or distress to people living nearby.

Straying and fouling

If you continually allow your pet or pets to roam and stray unattended, or allow them to foul and do not immediately remove and dispose of the mess, then you will get a written warning that you must put things right immediately. If you fail to do so, we will take formal action against you for breach of your tenancy agreement. This could mean you have to re-home the pet or face possession proceedings to end your tenancy.

Excessive noise

If pets, in particular dogs, cause noise nuisance by barking, howling or scratching, then you must stop them doing so at once. You can get help and advice from a vet, dog warden or other appropriate expert. If the problem persists, we will take action for breach of the tenancy agreement and you may have to re-home the pet or face possession proceedings to end your tenancy.

Flea and vermin infestation

All tenants must keep their home clean and tidy so as not to cause a nuisance or endanger health. If you fail to keep your home clean, tidy and free from animal mess, fleas or vermin, you must put things right immediately and seek any help you need. However, if the problem persists, we will take action for breach of the tenancy agreement and you may have to re-home your pet or face possession proceedings to end your tenancy.

Pets that are or could be aggressive

If we think your pet may threaten, frighten or harm other people and stop them going about their business or enjoying their home, you must put things right at once. You should seek advice from a vet, dog warden or other expert. If you cannot keep the animal under control, or where we think a particular type or breed of animal is inappropriate to where you live, we will tell you to re-home the pet or face action for breach of tenancy, which may lead to possession proceedings to end your tenancy.

Other activities that breach the tenancy agreement include:

- allowing pets to wander unattended in communal areas, landings and walkways;
- allowing pets to urinate or foul in communal areas;
- failing to keep dogs on a lead in communal areas.

All tenants who choose to keep pets take full responsibility for their care, welfare and behaviour. You are responsible for ensuring your pet does not cause nuisance to others or break the terms of your tenancy agreement or any other legislation. Anyone who knowingly does not look after their pet properly is committing a criminal offence (The Animal Welfare Act 2006).

Irresponsible pet owners will NOT be allowed to keep pets in Impact accommodation, will lose any right or permission they may have had in the past and may be reported to the RSPCA.

How to apply to keep a pet

You can get an application form from your local housing office or download one from our website www.impacthousing.org.uk

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