

Pets

June 2015

Introduction

This resident summary provides you with information about keeping a pet in your home.

It applies to all residents with:

- Southern Housing Group Ltd, and
- Southern Home Ownership Ltd.

Different rights apply to different groups of residents so you should also refer to your tenancy agreement or lease.

Can I keep a pet?

We understand that a pet can be a great source of companionship, but we also need to be sure it is suitable so you must ask for our permission first.

It is important to get a pet consent letter from us before you start to keep any pet. The only exceptions being:

- fish (in small aquariums),
- hamsters or gerbils (in a single standard cage), or
- small birds (in a single standard cage).

You will also need our written agreement before you replace a pet.

Why we might say no

We will refuse if, in our opinion, the home you live in is not suitable for a pet of the type you have requested or if we think it is likely that your pet will cause a nuisance.

For example, we don't normally allow residents to keep dogs or cats in properties (especially flats) with communal access and no private garden because of the lack of space and the likelihood of problems being caused to residents living nearby.

We may refuse requests if we have evidence that residents are not managing their home adequately or we are aware of anti social behaviour. We will not give permission for pets which represent an unreasonable risk to our property or other residents.

We will also refuse permission to keep a pet if residents at your scheme have voted not to allow them.

If any resident has a pet without our written agreement then, even if they have had the pet for some time, it does not imply that we have given consent. In these cases we will look at the current circumstances and make a decision about the most appropriate way forward – but keeping a pet without our consent will break the legal agreement you have with us and we will insist that you find a new home for your pet.

If the matter continues then we will take legal action where we believe it is necessary. This could mean that you are subject to a court injunction or even that you lose your home if you do not take the reasonable steps that we ask you to.

When we may make an exception

We usually give our permission if you wish to keep an assistance dog which has been professionally trained to support residents with

disability. Please contact our Customer Service Centre for further details if you believe this may apply to your household.

A limited number of our sheltered schemes may allow residents to keep cats or dogs in some flats. This varies depending on where you live and special conditions will apply. To find out if this applies to your scheme, contact the Customer Service Centre.

If there is strong evidence that the Group have incorrectly given consent for a pet then the Group will look at the current circumstances and make a formal decision about the most appropriate way forward in each case.

Otherwise our residents have made it clear that our policy must be to look at the suitability of the property and not the person, to ensure that pet issues are managed fairly and equally. This means that whilst we recognise the therapeutic benefit pets may bring to many residents we will not give permission for them where we consider a property is unsuitable.

General guidelines for keeping a pet

It is important that you have considered what it will mean to own a pet:

- how long will the pet live and how big will it grow?
- what are the extra costs - such as food, equipment and vet bills?
- are you able to give the constant care, attention and exercise it will require? What will happen when you are not at home?
- How will it impact your home – taking up space, making noise and creating mess?
- If we give you permission for keeping a pet then you will be asked to sign an Acceptance of Terms form which sets out in more detail the conditions for keeping a pet in your home. These include:

- you are responsible for keeping it appropriately housed and under control at all times,
- you must not allow it to cause a nuisance, annoyance or to threaten other people,
- you must not let it damage our property - including fixtures and fittings and communal areas,
- you must make sure it doesn't foul any areas that we own or manage (and immediately clear up any mess if it does), and
- you must not use it for commercial breeding purposes at our property.

In some areas the Group may introduce local regulations such as pet free zones or introducing compulsory pet passports – you must also comply with these regulations.

If we believe that you are not managing your pet properly we will insist that you find a new home for your pet. Failure to do so may mean that we take legal action against you.

Further information

If you would like any more information on this or any of our other policies or services please contact our customer service centre or go to our website www.shgroup.org.uk. Contact details can be found on our webpage, on our Information Card or in Open Door- your residents' newsletter.

Feedback and Complaints

If you have something to say about the Group's policies and procedures or the information we provide on them then let us know. Please address this feedback to Policy Services Team c/o PO Box 643, Horsham RH12 1XJ or email to servicecentre@shgroup.org.uk marking the email 'Policy Feedback'.

If you have a complaint then either our Customer Service Centre or local staff will attempt to deal with it and resolve it. If we can't

find a solution in this way, or if you prefer to deal with the matter more formally, then our complaints procedure will help you. Ask the Customer Service Centre for a leaflet which tells you how your complaint will be handled.

All complaints are dealt with in strict confidence. Our commitment to fairness means that you will not be treated differently if you make a complaint about our service.

For help with translations, or if a large type, Braille or taped summary would be useful, contact the Service Centre.

Arabic	لتلقي المساعدة في الحصول على نسخ مترجمة أو إذا كان من المفيد بالنسبة لكم تلقي نسخ مطبوعة بطباعة مكبرة، أو بطريقة برايل للمكفوفين، أو مسجلة كملخصات على شريط تسجيل صوتي، فيرجى الاتصال بمركز الخدمة Service Centre .
Bengali	অনুবাদে সাহায্য পেতে হলে অথবা বড় অক্ষর, ব্রেইল অথবা টেপে রেকর্ডকৃত সারসংক্ষেপ শুনতে চাইলে সার্ভিস সেন্টারকে 0300 303 1682 নাম্বারে ফোন করুন।
French	Contactez le Centre de services pour obtenir de l'aide sur les traductions, ou si un résumé en gros caractères, en Braille ou enregistré s'avère nécessaire.
Somali	Si lagaaga caawiyo turjumista ama haddii aad jeclaan lahayd farta waaweyn, farta indhoolayaasha (Braille) ama warbixin kooban oo cajilad ku duuban, la xiriir Xarunta Adeegga.
Spanish	Si necesita traducciones o resúmenes en letra grande, Braille o casete, póngase en contacto con el Centro de Servicios.
Turkish	Tercüme konusunda yardım için, veya iri puntolu, Braille körler alfabesi ile yazılmış ya da ses kaydı olarak bir özet isterseniz, 0300 303 1683'ten Hizmet Merkezi'ni arayın.