



Pet-Friendly Policy

SER-POL-54

Version 2.0

Date approved: Approved by: Executive

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Southway supports responsible pet ownership and recognises the positive impact pets can have on wellbeing. Consent will normally be granted, subject to property suitability and the tenant's ability to care for the animal responsibly. Southway will work with tenants to resolve issues where a pet causes a problem.
- 1.2. This policy applies to -
- General let properties (with no communal or shared areas)
 - General Let apartments (with communal entrances or shared areas)
 - Age Friendly schemes (with additional considerations)
- 1.3. Where a person has a different type of tenure, such as shared ownership or leasehold, decisions about pets will be considered in line with the relevant agreement or contract they have with Southway, such as their lease agreement.

2. Legal and Regulatory Requirements

- 2.1. Tenants must comply with all relevant legislation, including:
- Animal Welfare Act 2006
 - Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 (as amended), including XL Bully controls (microchipping, neutering, muzzling in public, liability insurance).
 - Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
 - Poultry keepers must register with APHA from 1 October 2024.

Related documents

- Tenancy agreement
- Pet agreement form
- Complaint handling policy
- ASB Policy
- Repairs Policy

3. Consent to keep pets

- 3.1. Tenants in general let properties with no communal or shared spaces do not usually need consent for a pet unless it is for poultry (see 3.12 – 3.14)
- 3.2. Tenants in all other types of property must have consent before keeping any pet that:
- Needs to leave the property (e.g. cats, dogs)
 - May cause nuisance or impact shared areas
- 3.3. Requests can be made by using the ‘pet request’ form, submitted in person, by email or by post.
- 3.4. We aim to respond within 10 working days.
- 3.5. We will look at each request individually and explain our decision.

Property type	Usually appropriate pets	Indicative quantity	Additional considerations
General let house or bungalow with private garden and no shared areas	Cats, dogs, caged birds, fish, small, caged animals such as hamsters, guinea pigs or rabbits. Poultry may be considered where suitable.	Up to 2 cats or dogs, or a reasonable number of small, caged animals or fish, depending on space and welfare needs.	Tenant remains responsible for preventing nuisance, fouling, damage and noise. Poultry and external animal accommodation need written permission.
General let flat or apartment with communal entrance or shared areas	Indoor cats, small dogs where suitable, caged birds, fish and small caged animals.	Usually 1 cat or dog, or a reasonable number of small, caged animals or fish, depending on the size and layout of the home.	Consider access, lifts, stairs, shared entrances, noise, smells, pet toileting arrangements and impact on neighbours.
General let flat or apartment with no direct outdoor access	Indoor cats, fish, caged birds and small caged animals. Dogs may only be suitable in limited circumstances.	Usually 1 cat, or a reasonable number of small, caged animals or fish.	Dogs should be considered carefully because of exercise, toileting and access needs. The tenant must be able to manage the pet without causing nuisance in shared areas.
Age Friendly scheme	Small dogs, indoor cats, fish, caged birds and small caged animals, where the individual property and scheme are	Usually 1 cat or dog, or a reasonable number of small, caged animals or fish.	Consider the shared nature of the scheme, resident wellbeing, mobility, emergency pet carer arrangements, communal

	suitable.		areas and the needs of other residents.
Any property with shared gardens or shared outdoor space	Indoor pets, fish, caged birds and small caged animals. Cats or dogs may be considered where suitable.	Usually 1 cat or dog, or a reasonable number of small caged animals or fish.	External animal accommodation, poultry, hutches, runs, kennels or pens will not usually be approved where outdoor space is shared.

- 3.6. All approvals will be supported by a signed Pet Agreement Form.
- 3.7. If consent cannot be given, we will explain the reasons clearly and, where possible, discuss alternative options or support.
- 3.8. If we become aware that a tenant is keeping a pet without required consent, we will ask the tenant to complete the pet request form. If permission is not granted, we will explain why and work with the tenant to rehome the pet.

Assistance Animals

- 3.9. To verify whether an animal is an 'assistance animal' we may ask what tasks the animal has been trained to perform.
- 3.10. Where relevant we may ask for the Assistance Dog UK ID Booklet or proof the animal is on the Assistance Dog Registry however, we acknowledge this is not a legal requirement and we will not refuse permission because this documentation cannot be produced.

Poultry and External Animal Accommodation – relevant for all types of property

- 3.11. Written permission is required to keep poultry and will depend on the property type, location, and the tenant's ability to manage the birds responsibly.
- 3.12. Chickens, ducks, or geese may only be kept with written permission and must not be kept in communal areas.
- 3.13. External animal accommodation requires written approval and will not be approved where outdoor spaces are shared.

4. Additional Rules for Age Friendly

- 4.1. In Age Friendly Schemes, requests to keep a pet are considered individually, taking account of the residents needs, and the shared nature of the scheme.

4.2. When considering a request, we will look at:

- whether the property is suitable (for example, access to outdoor space where needed),
- the resident's ability to care for the pet safely and responsibly,
- the impact on neighbours and shared areas,
- and any previous animal-related anti-social behaviour.

4.3. Pets are not permitted in guest rooms, except for registered assistance dogs.

Emergency Situations, Temporary Care and Abandoned Pets

4.4. In emergencies, our priority is the safety and welfare of tenants and their pets.

4.5. When consent is given, tenants will be asked to provide details of an emergency pet carer in case they become unable to care for the pet.

4.6. If a tenant is admitted to hospital or is otherwise unable to care for their pet, and no nominated carer is available, Southway may ask Adult Social Care to help arrange temporary support, in line with the Care Act 2014.

4.7. Where a pet is left unattended or abandoned, we will take action to protect its welfare, including contacting the appropriate authorities where needed.

4.8. Any reasonable costs incurred as a result of emergency or abandonment situations may need to be recharged to the tenant.

5. Behaviour, Nuisance and Visiting Pets – applies to all pet owners

5.1. Pet owners must take reasonable steps to make sure their pet does not cause nuisance or risk to others.

5.2. A pet may be considered a problem if it causes ongoing nuisance or risk to others, for example:

- excessive or persistent noise,
- strong or persistent smells,
- unsafe or aggressive behaviour,
- damage to the property or shared areas,
- dog fouling in communal or surrounding areas.

- 5.3. If concerns are raised, Southway will work with the tenant to understand the issue and agree practical steps to resolve it wherever possible.
- 5.4. If problems continue despite support and agreed actions, we may review our permission to keep the pet. In serious or persistent cases, tenancy enforcement or legal action may be considered as a last resort.
- 5.5. Any concerns about animal neglect or welfare will be referred to the RSPCA or the Police where appropriate.
- 5.6. Tenants are responsible for any damage caused by their pet and may be recharged for repairs or cleaning.
- 5.7. Visiting pets do not need prior permission, but, tenants must make sure they comply with this policy and do not cause nuisance or risk to others.
- 5.8. Tenants remain responsible for the behaviour of their visitors and their pets, in line with the Tenancy Agreement.

6. Appeals and Complaints

- 6.1. If a tenant disagrees with a decision made under this policy, they may ask for it to be reviewed.
- 6.2. If consent to keep a pet is refused, the tenant may appeal the decision. Appeals will be reviewed by the Age Friendly Housing Manager or the Head of Housing Management and Support, depending on who made the original decision.
- 6.3. When reviewing an appeal, we will consider all relevant information, including any additional details provided by the tenant.
- 6.4. We will explain the outcome of the appeal and the reasons for the decision.
- 6.5. Any complaints about how this policy has been applied will be managed in line with Southway's Complaint Handling Policy.

7. Equality

- 7.1. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed to ensure that all appropriate actions are put in place to support tenants who have protected characteristics

8. Monitoring

- 8.1. The Head of Housing Management and Support is responsible for the implementation of the Policy and will carry out regular checks of compliance.
- 8.2. The Policy is supported by a detailed procedural guide and regular training will take place to ensure that staff are both aware of and comply with the legislation and the Policy.

Glossary of terms

Abandoned pet is a pet that has been left without appropriate care, supervision, or arrangements for its welfare.

Age Friendly accommodation is housing intended for older residents where additional consideration may be needed because of the shared nature of the scheme and the needs of other residents.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is conduct that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm, distress, nuisance, or annoyance to other people.

Appeal is a request for Southway to review a decision made under this policy.

Assistance animal is an animal trained to carry out tasks that assist a disabled person. Evidence may be requested where appropriate, but documentation is not always a legal requirement.

Complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about how this policy has been applied or about the service provided, which will be handled under the Complaint Handling Policy.

Domestic pet is a pet normally kept in a home, such as a cat, dog, bird, fish, or small animal typically under 10kg. In this policy, domestic pets may include larger pets such as cats and dogs, subject to property suitability.

Emergency pet carer is a person nominated by the tenant who can temporarily care for a pet if the tenant becomes unwell or is otherwise unable to look after it.

External animal accommodation are outdoor structures or spaces used to house animals, such as hutches, coops, runs, kennels, or pens.

Nuisance is behaviour or conditions that unreasonably interfere with other people's comfort, safety, or use of their home or shared areas, for example noise, smells, fouling, or damage.

Poultry are birds kept for domestic purposes, such as chickens, ducks, or geese.

Prohibited animal is an animal that Southway will not permit under this policy because of legal, safety, welfare, or property-related reasons.

Property suitability is whether a property is suitable for a particular pet, taking account of factors such as size, layout, access to outdoor space, shared areas, and the likely impact on neighbours.

Recharge is the recovery by Southway of reasonable costs from a tenant, for example where repairs, cleaning, or emergency action are needed because of a pet.

Shared or communal areas are areas used by more than one resident, such as entrances, corridors, stairwells, lifts, gardens, or other communal spaces.

Written consent is formal permission given by Southway for a tenant to keep a pet or animal where approval is required under this policy.

POLICY REVIEW HISTORY	
<i>To be completed during each review</i>	
Previous versions	
Date of last EIA:	
Review lead by:	Claire Davies
Main points or amendments made and reasons Version 2.0 is significantly more comprehensive, more legally aligned, and operationally clearer. It broadens the scope, strengthens regulatory compliance, adds multiple new policy areas, and provides more detailed processes and enforcement mechanisms. 1. Expanded Policy Scope - V2.0 applies to all Southway property types, whereas V1.0 focused on General Let Apartments and Age Friendly Schemes. 2. Much Broader and Clearer Definitions - V2.0 introduces detailed definitions for: <i>Domestic pets</i> (including size/weight criteria) <i>Prohibited animals</i> (exotics, livestock, venomous species) <i>Problem pets, ASB, External animal accommodation</i>, etc. 3. Significantly Expanded Legal & Regulatory Requirements - V2.0 adds: - Animal Welfare Act 2006 - Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 - Poultry registration rules (from Oct 2024) - Equality legislation	

○ Additional UK housing-related legislation 4. Stronger and More Detailed Consent Process • V2.0 specifies: ○ A formal <i>pet request form</i> ○ Response times (10 working days) ○ Reasons for refusal ○ Rules around number of pets allowed 5. New Sections Added in V2.0 V2.0 introduces completely new policy areas, including: • Assistance animals • Poultry and external animal accommodation • Abandoned/unattended pets • Monitoring, compliance checks, and procedural alignment These do not appear in V1.0. [Pet Friendly Policy Word] 6. Behaviour, Nuisance & Enforcement Clarified • V2.0 includes an expanded list of nuisance behaviours and explicitly states: ○ When consent may be withdrawn ○ That tenants may be recharged for damage ○ How ASB complaints will be handled 7. Changes to Age Friendly Scheme Rules • V2.0 adds: ○ More defined assessment criteria ○ Property suitability considerations ○ Behaviour-based refusal grounds 8. Emergency and Temporary Care Guidance Expanded • V2.0 formalises: ○ Required emergency carers ○ Adult Social Care involvement ○ Rules for abandoned pets 9. Improved Policy Governance • V2.0 adds: ○ A monitoring section ○ Equality Impact Assessment confirmation ○ Links to related policies (ASB, complaints, repairs)	
Next review due:	Q1 2029/30
Approval level:	Chief Executive