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**Pet-Friendly Policy - Social and Affordable Rent  
Apartments and Age Friendly Homes**

**[SER-POL-54]**

**Version [1.0]**

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**Date approved: 17 May 2024**

**Approved by: Chief Executive**

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This policy applies to Social and Affordable Rent, General Let Apartments, and Age Friendly Schemes managed by the Trust.
- 1.2 The Trust is positive about pets and wants to ensure that tenants can easily obtain consent to keep a pet in their home, subject to reasonable terms. We will also seek to minimise disruption or inconvenience to neighbouring tenants by encouraging responsible pet ownership.
- 1.3 The Trust recognises that owning a pet can bring great comfort and happiness to a person. However, if a pet becomes a problem for its owner or for others, we will work with the pet owner to solve or alleviate the situation.

## **2. Relevant Legislation and definition of domestic pets**

- 2.1 The Trust's definition of domestic pets is small birds, animals and fish (including rabbits, domestic rodents and some reptiles), cats and dogs could be suitable depending on the type of accommodation and a tenant's circumstances.
- 2.2 As per our tenancy agreement, we will not give permission for any prohibited dog within the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.
- 2.3 The Dangerous Dogs (Designated Types) (England and Wales) Order 2023, added XL Bully type dogs to the list of banned dangerous dogs in England and Wales under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.
- 2.4 The Trust will not give permission for new applications to keep an XL Bully type dog in Age Friendly Schemes or apartments.
- 2.5 The Trust expects tenants living in these settings who already own an XL Bully Type dog to provide proof of valid Certification of Exemption and comply with the legal requirements.
- 2.6 The Trust will respond to and deal with complaints about XL Bully type dogs by working in partnership with the Police.

### **3. Our Approach**

#### **In our Age Friendly Schemes:**

- 3.1 With our prior consent the Trust will permit tenants to own a pet within our Age Friendly Schemes. This will only be required for pets that need to leave the vicinity of a tenant's home or could cause a nuisance i.e. cats and dogs.
- 3.2 Guest Rooms: other than disability related assistance dogs the Trust will not allow pets to stay in guest rooms. This is because of hygiene and potential allergies.
- 3.3 The Trust will allow a tenant to keep one pet within their home. In some instances, it may be appropriate to own more than one pet. Consent will be reviewed considering the pets' welfare needs, what can be sensibly managed by the tenant and what will work within the scheme.
- 3.4 Written consent will be given after consideration by the Age Friendly Housing Officer and will be accompanied by a Pet Agreement form. This form must be completed for consent to be given.

#### **Foster care in Age Friendly Schemes in the event of an emergency:**

- 3.5 In instances where the nominated pet carer is unavailable, the Age Friendly Housing Officers will request help from the Adult Social Care Team. The Care Act (2014) places a duty on local authorities to take reasonable steps to protect the property of an adult with care and support needs and who is being cared for away from home. This includes arranging for pets to be looked after where their owner has not already made those arrangements and they have no one else to assist them.
- 3.6 If the pet owner lacks the mental capacity to make a decision regarding the safety and welfare arrangements for their pet (at the time the decision needs to be made) a 'best interests decision-making process' must be followed, with clear records of all options considered and the basis for the decision made. We would expect Adult Social Care to complete this decision-making process.

#### **In our General Let Apartments**

- 3.7 This policy applies to Apartments that have shared entrances and a communal stair well or lift, both of which service more than two homes.
- 3.8 With prior consent The Trust will permit tenants to own a pet, that needs to leave the tenants home or could cause a nuisance to other residents i.e. cats and dogs.

- 3.9 Consent will be given after consideration by the Housing Officer and may include consulting with other residents if the apartments have been allocated on a No Pet Policy.

### **Terms of Consent**

- 3.10 All pet requests must be submitted with a signed 'Pet Agreement Form'. The form lists the terms and conditions of keeping a pet. The terms and conditions will also be reiterated in the permission letter sent by the Trust.

### **Visiting Pets**

- 3.11 Visitors to the apartments and Age Friendly schemes may also bring their pets. This is quite acceptable as long as visitors keep to the same terms and conditions that are required of customers who have pets at the scheme. Tenants are responsible for all visitors and their pets at their property.

### **Dealing with pets that become a “problem”**

- 3.12 A problem is where a pet causes an issue for other tenants in the apartments or Age Friendly scheme. This may be in the form of unreasonable noise, smell, damage to property or aggression.
- 3.13 Pets can, on occasions, become a problem both to their owners and to others in the scheme. In these circumstances the Housing Officer must work with the pet owner to identify a solution. Being told to part with a pet will often be heart-breaking to a customer and must be avoided in most instances.
- 3.14 Some tenants on a low income or of retirement age may be able to obtain veterinary treatment for the pet through organisations such as the PDSA (Peoples Dispensary for Sick Animals). This will be discussed this with the tenant – it may be that they could talk to their vet about spreading payments over an agreed period.
- 3.15 When a dog has become aggressive and is constantly barking, the Trust will work with tenants to explain the impact that the pet is having on others and understand the reasons why their pet is behaving in a certain way.
- 3.16 The Trust will explain the relevant clauses in the tenancy agreement which clearly outline a tenant's responsibility in relation to keeping a pet and may withdraw consent for the pet to live in the apartment or scheme.

3.17 Where the Trust suspects that an animal is being neglected The Trust will be refer to the local branch of the RSPCA and possibly the Police.

#### 4. Appeals

4.1 Appeals where consent has been refused will be dealt with by either the (Age Friendly) Housing Manager or the Head of Housing Management and Support, dependant on who has refused consent.

<b>POLICY REVIEW HISTORY</b>	
<i>To be completed during each review</i>	
<b>Previous versions</b>	
<b>Date of last EIA:</b>	
<b>Review lead by:</b>	Claire Davies
<b>Main points or amendments made and reasons</b>	
<p>Amended from an Age Friendly specific policy to apply to all apartments that are general let and may have been let with on a No Pet Policy.            Removed reference to internal procedures / record keeping.            Added in Relevant Legislation to include reference to XL Bully dogs amendment            Added an appeals process.</p>	
<b>Next review due:</b>	<b>Q1 2025/26</b>
<b>Approval level:</b>	<b>Chief Executive</b>