



POLICY DOCUMENT

Group Member: Progress Housing Group

Service Area: Neighbourhoods

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Subject Title: Pets Policy

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Document Owner: Head of Operations (Neighbourhoods
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy sets out our approach to the keeping of pets and clearly defines the basis on which decisions will be made following requests for permission to keep pets within properties owned by the Group.
- 1.2 The Pets Policy is designed to ensure that the Group provides a clear and consistent approach in the administration and process of pet permission applications.
- 1.3 The policy was reviewed following guidance produced by the RSPCA, 'Housing - A Good Practice Guidance' in 2017
- 1.4 Many studies carried out to examine the psychological and physiological benefits that pets can bring to their owners. These have shown that for children, pet ownership under responsible adult supervision can help develop social skills, social and moral responsibility, empathy and a caring and nurturing attitude to others.
- 1.5 Pet ownership has also been shown to benefit older adults. Age can bring reduced mobility and independence as well as a smaller social group as mobility reduces. This can lead to older people growing more isolated and lonely, which can affect both psychological and physical health. Pet ownership should be considered as an additional factor that can help people live happy and fulfilling lives.
- 1.6 It is also recognised, however that irresponsible ownership can also cause suffering to animals as well as nuisance to other residents, which affects tenancy sustainability. We endeavour to make decisions in the interests of the animal, the owner and the wider community in which they will live.

2. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

- 2.1 This policy applies to tenants of Progress Housing Association Limited.
- 2.2 The policy does not apply to Reside Housing Association, Progress Housing Group Limited, Concert Living Limited, Key Unlocking Futures Limited and Progress Living.
- 2.3 The policy applies to requests for existing, new or replacement pets staying permanently in one of the above properties.
- 2.4 This policy refers to guidance on what we expect of pet owners and how pet management issues may be resolved.

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- 2.5 Pet permission will not usually be granted for our interim accommodation as it may reduce housing options and increase financial burden for the household in a crisis situation however we may allow pre-owned animals on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Area Housing Teams.
- 2.6 Leaseholders must check their lease to find out whether or not they are permitted to keep pets in their home, and there may also be restrictions regarding the types of animals that may be kept. However, if the lease does permit pets, it will contain a clause requiring the leaseholder to ensure any pets do not cause nuisance or annoyance. Leaseholders must ensure they can comply with this requirement. Otherwise they will be in breach of their lease conditions.
- 2.7 We do not intend to proactively target households who already have pets or revoke historical permissions unless we become aware of any management issues concerning this.
- 2.8 Residents who wish to look after an animal on a temporary basis (such as an emergency situation for family) should contact the Group to advise of the circumstances and agree to a set timescale. Frequent visiting animals will be treated as per the same terms of this policy.

3. RESPONSIBILITY

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of Directors and Managers across the Group to implement this policy. All staff members have a responsibility to follow the policy and procedures at all times.
- 3.2 Area Housing Teams are responsible for processing new housing applications and the pet permission requests received in line with this policy and to refer to the relevant Housing Operations team where discretionary decisions are required.
- 3.3 Discretion will be applied and consultations carried out by Area Housing Officers for general need and leasehold properties and by the Independent Living Coordinator for Independent Living properties.

4. POLICY

4.1 Aims & Objectives

- 4.1.1 This policy aims is to provide a foundation for a consistent and enforceable approach to pet ownership.

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- 4.1.2 We aim to provide a balance between the benefits to a person that pet ownership can bring and managing our homes and estates to ensure that pet ownership does not infringe on the right of others to the peaceful enjoyment of their home.
- 4.1.3 Our objective is to provide residents with clear guidance on how to apply for permission, how to be a responsible pet owner and how permission may be revoked.
- 4.1.4 We also aim to provide residents with an understanding as to which types of animals are acceptable as pets and in what type of property.

4.2 Applying for permission

- 4.2.1 As set out within the tenancy agreement, residents will be required to seek permission in writing before taking ownership of any pet. However as set out in this policy the Group will agree to automatically grant pet permissions subject to the following criteria:

4.3 Animal Type(s):

- 4.3.1 Permission will be automatically granted to small domestic animals which are permanently housed in cages, bowls or tanks inside the home and do not need to be allowed outside of the property, for example small birds, fish, hamsters or mice etc. If the tenant has their own private garden, permission may be given for them to keep small pets in hutches such as rabbits or guinea pigs so long as the numbers are kept low i.e. maximum of two.
- 4.3.2 Permission will be automatically granted for up to two animals that are either cat or dog (two dogs or two cats or one of each). Any exceptions to this must be agreed by the relevant Housing Operations Team and will take into account a variety of factors including the type and size of animals.
- 4.3.3 Any additional animals that exceed the guidance above will require an application and completed pet contract, please refer to Appendix 1.
- 4.3.4 The Group will automatically permit the keeping of guide or other assistance animals for residents with disabilities but will still require permission to be requested in writing along with

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supporting documentation. All permissions are subject to behaviour rules.

- 4.3.5 Permission will not normally be granted for any non-domestic animal such as farm animals or any type of bird of prey, including, but not limited to, pigs, ducks, chickens, owls. Where this is considered, it will be done in full consultation with relevant residents.
- 4.3.6 Permission will not be given in any circumstances to keep any dog listed as dangerous as defined by the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991. This includes the Pit Bull Terrier, Japanese Tosa, Dogo Argentino and Fila Brasileiro.
- 4.3.7 An application is required for exotic pets such as snakes or spiders and you will be required to complete a pet contract as listed in Appendix 1, but this will be refused if the pet:
- Requires a licence and the tenant does not hold one
 - Could pose a safety risk to the household or neighbours should it escape.

4.4 Property suitability

- 4.4.1 The Group will not grant permission when a tenant does not have adequate space in their home or garden for the type of pet they are applying to keep. This is particularly important when considering an application to keep a dog.
- 4.4.2 If a number of other pets already exist in the property, permission will not be given where a new pet will affect their welfare. Health, safety and hygiene will all be considered. Too many pets in a property may cause a nuisance to neighbours or damage to the property.
- 4.4.3 The Group will generally have a no pets allowed policy where there is only a communal entrance for residents to enter by. This is to reduce the nuisance caused to others in the block, maintain cleanliness standards and ensure that all residents have the same right of enjoyment over the communal areas. The exception to this will only be where a guide dog or support animal is required.
- 4.4.4 Where the Group have blocks with a communal entrance where there is a pets allowed policy this will be clearly advertised as such and monitored for sustainability. The relevant Housing Operations team may carry out consultation

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at any time they feel fit should they feel the tenancy make up has changed considerably or should pet nuisance be identified.

- 4.4.5 We will not grant permission for animals to be housed in a communal area or garden and as such hutches, kennels, aviaries, etc. will not be granted permission unless they are within a private garden.

4.5 Personal circumstances

- 4.5.1 Customers are responsible for the health and welfare of their pets. In accordance with the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and the Animal Health & Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006, all customers have a duty of care to provide their pets with a suitable place to live, a suitable diet, proper exercise and adequate health care.
- 4.5.2 Customers must provide information regarding any previous prosecutions for an offence against animals or being responsible with their care.
- 4.5.3 Staff will assess pet requests using prescribed criteria which will include disability, type of property, and the existing number of pets within the household, any history of pet related problems and the impact on neighbours.

5. Permission Refusal

- 5.1 Permission will not be unreasonably withheld and will be based on the scheme standards and consultations. All applications will be dealt with on a case by case basis by the Area Housing Teams, who are responsible for any discretionary decisions made in line with the management of the wider estate/scheme.
- 5.2 Where the customer is unhappy with the decision provided, they may seek a review of the decision made with the Area Housing Manager, or an independent manager who has not been involved in the decision if felt necessary.

6. Animal Nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour

- 6.1 Customers must ensure that their pets do not cause a nuisance to neighbours or their visitors. Pet nuisance includes but is not limited to dog fouling, excessive noise and damage to property. Dogs must be kept on a lead in all communal areas and walkways.

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- 6.2 Pets must not be used as a weapon or to cause harassment or / and intimidation.
- 6.3 Under the Housing Act 1996 s.218A, introduced by the Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) Act 2003, the Group as social landlords are required to prepare and publish policies and procedures to deal with ASB.
- 6.4 Any ASB related to pet nuisance and dangerous dogs will be dealt with as defined in the Group's ASB Policy.

7. Breeding and Accidental Ownership

- 7.1 Tenants may not breed and / or sell animals in premises that the Group owns or manages (including garages and outbuildings).
- 7.2 The Group encourages customers not to become 'Accidental Owners' (those who acquire pets from friends and neighbours) without fully considering the animals welfare needs and their ability to provide this.
- 7.3 It is recommended that, where permission is given to keep a dog, cat or rabbit, it is neutered. This will help to ensure that the animal is unable to breed and prevent the pet population spiralling out of control.

8. Pets Left Behind

- 8.1 Pets must not be left unattended for a period of time that will result in the owner being unable to meet its welfare needs as defined under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 (s.9).
- 8.2 If the Group believes that a pet kept in the property has been neglected or abandoned, we will report the case to local police and an appropriate animal welfare organisation.
- 8.3 Where a tenant is taken into hospital or care temporarily and an animal is left behind, the Group will contact the relevant Local Authority under the National Assistance Act 1948 (s.48) to assist in the animals welfare.

9. Working in Partnership

- 9.1 The Group is aware that in most instances dealing with animal-related problems is best tackled in partnership. Where appropriate the Group will work with the Local Authority, Police, RSPA or any other organisation that may provide the most beneficial resolution.
- 9.2 If a customer fails to act responsibly, the Group will attempt to resolve the issue amicably. Should these steps fail, enforcement action will be taken. This could include professional mediation; contacting a

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statutory authority e.g. RSPCA for assistance; serving an injunction; restricting the number of pets at the property; withdrawing pet permission and seeking possession of the property.

10. ABBREVIATIONS

- RSPCA – Royal Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals
- ASB – Anti-social behaviour

11. DEFINITIONS

The Group – Progress Housing Group Limited (and its subsidiary companies from time to time)

For the purpose of this policy, a Pet is defined as any domesticated or tamed animal that is kept as a companion and cared for responsibly.

12. LEGISLATION

- The Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
- The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991
- Animal Welfare Act 2006
- Animal Health & Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006
- Anti- Social Behaviour, Crime and policing Act 2014
- National Assistance Act 1948
- Equality Act 2010

13. DATA PROTECTION

In taking applications under the policy we are aware that we will be handling personal information. All handling of the personal data will be conducted under the PHG Data Protection Policy, ensuring compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

14. IMPLEMENTATION

14.1 Training

Relevant staff will be trained to evaluate applications for keeping pets in line with this policy.

Front line staff dealing with animals will be trained in primary legislation surrounding animal welfare and how to apply the law and The Group policy in enforcing tenancy agreements.

14.2 Linked Documents

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- PHG ASB policy
- PHG Feedback Policy
- PHG Allocations policy
- Place Management Strategy
- RSPCA 'Housing- A Good Practise Guidance' 2017

15. CONSULTATION

This policy has been consulted upon with our Housing Operations Team and Operational Leadership Team in October 2021.

16. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed as and when needed but as a minimum of every 3 years.

17. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

17.1 We welcome feedback on this policy and procedure and the way it operates. We are interested to know of any possible or actual adverse impact that this policy and procedure may have on any groups in respect of gender or marital status, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age or other characteristics.

17.2 The policy has been screened to determine equality relevance for the following equality groups; gender or marital status, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age or other characteristics. The policy is considered to have little or no equality relevance

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Appendix 1

Pet Contract

Progress Housing Association Ltd, trading as Progress Housing Group, has given permission for

Name(s):

to keep the pet(s) listed below at

Address:

Pet Details-

Please list all animals within the household.

Name: Type: Breed: Marks / Colourings:

Vaccinations (yes/no): Neutered / spayed (yes/no):

Name: Type: Breed: Marks / Colourings:

Vaccinations (yes/no): Neutered / spayed (yes/no):

Veterinary Practice Details

Name: Address: Tel:

Nominated Emergency Person Details

Name: Address: Tel:

In signing this agreement I/we have read understood and agree to the following conditions:

1. Tenants must provide contact details of their veterinary practice and a nominated person who will care for their pets in case of an emergency.
2. Tenants are responsible for the health and welfare of their pets. In accordance with the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and the Animal Health & Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006, all tenants have a duty of care to provide their

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pets with a suitable place to live, a suitable diet, proper exercise and adequate health care.

3. If the Group believes that a pet kept in the property has been neglected or abandoned, we will report the case to the local police and appropriate animal welfare organisation.
4. Tenants must not leave their pets in the property when they are away unless clear arrangements have been made for their care. Pets should be boarded elsewhere but close supervision by a neighbour may be acceptable for some animals.
5. Tenants must ensure that their dogs will not cause damage to the property or noise nuisance if they are left unsupervised.
6. All pets must be vaccinated and regularly treated for fleas and worms (if appropriate).
7. Tenants may be recharged to cover the cost of professionally cleaning the property once they have moved out.
8. Tenants must ensure that their pets do not cause a nuisance to neighbours or visitors. This includes dog fouling, excessive noise and damage to other people's property. Dogs must be kept under control and on a lead in all communal areas and walkways.
9. Pets must not be allowed to foul in the property, except for caged pets and pets trained to use a litter tray. The only exception to this rule would be in the event of illness of a pet, in this event, any faeces must be removed immediately. Any pet faeces must be removed immediately from the garden or outside areas and disposed of safely and hygienically.
10. Tenants are responsible for keeping all areas of the property clean and free from parasites, such as fleas. We reserve the right to recharge for any pest control treatment necessary to be carried out on your property.

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11. Dogs must by law, wear a collar with their owner's name and address on it when in a public place. Cats should also wear a 'snap apart' collar to enable them to be identified. Both dogs and cats should be microchipped.
12. Dogs listed under the Dangerous Dog Act 1991 and any animal listed in the schedule of the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 may not be kept in this property.
13. Tenants may not intentionally breed or offer for sale any animal in this property.
14. Tenants who wish to obtain an additional or replacement pet after moving into the property must apply for permission in writing to the Group.

Print : _____ on behalf of the Group

Signed : _____ on behalf of the Group

Print : _____ Tenant 1

Signed : _____ Tenant 1

Print : _____ Tenant 2 (if joint tenancy)

Signed : _____ Tenant 2 (if joint tenancy)

18.