

Pets Policy

Housing Management policy 15

Keniston Housing Association

Introduction

Keniston recognises that pets that are well cared for and responsibly kept provides owners with companionship, comfort and a way of socialising with others. Pets also promote health and well-being. However, keeping pets can pose challenges for example, intimidation by dogs, dog fouling and noise caused by dog barking constitutes anti-social behaviour. This policy is in response to an increasing number of pet related nuisances. With some consideration and informed advice, pet ownership can be a pleasure for the owner and for the wider community.

Legal and Regulatory framework

The Animal Welfare Act 2006

The Dangerous wild animals Act 1976

Clean and Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005

The tenancy agreement states (a) 'not to keep any animal or bird at the property without our written consent (which will not be unreasonably withheld). (b) Not to allow any animal or bird kept at or visiting the Property to cause damage to the Property, or to cause a nuisance or annoyance in the neighbourhood and to keep any such animal or bird under proper control at all times. (c) We may withdraw any consent if the keeping of any animal or bird causes damage to the Property or causes a nuisance or annoyance in the neighbourhood.

Our tenancy agreement states:

'(9) (a) Not to keep any animal or bird at the Property without our written consent (which will not be unreasonably withheld). We will only withhold consent where acting reasonably we consider that such animal or bird might damage the Property or cause a nuisance or annoyance to other persons in the neighbourhood.

(b) Not to allow any animal or bird kept at or visiting the Property to cause damage to the Property, or to cause a nuisance or annoyance in the neighbourhood and to keep any such animal or bird under proper control at all times.

We may withdraw any consent given in accordance with clause 9(a) above if the keeping of any animal or bird causes damage to the Property or causes a nuisance or annoyance in the neighbourhood.'

Policy statement

This policy outlines Keniston's approach to pet ownership within its housing stock and is written with guidance from the Pet Advisory Committee document 'Guidelines on Pet Management for Housing Providers' and RSPCA's 'Housing, A guide to good practice'. Keniston recognises that keeping pets can offer significant benefits to their owners. However, irresponsible ownership can cause nuisance and affect the quality of life for other residents in an area.

We aim to promote responsible pet ownership so that owners can enjoy their pets and the community does not have to tolerate nuisance caused by pets. All tenancy agreements issued by Keniston state that the Association's consent or permission is required to keep a pet.

The control of any pet visiting the property is the responsibility of the tenant. If all efforts fail to resolve the situation informally Keniston will consider withdrawing

permission to keep the animal within the property. We may, following consultation with residents designate certain communal areas as dog free zones.

Residents in sheltered housing are asked to discuss their intention to acquire a pet with the Sheltered Scheme Manager. Keniston is flexible when allowing pets in flats, but permission will be granted based on the size of the flat, other tenant and safety issues.

A common complaint is of cats fouling the area. Whilst this may be a nuisance to residents, it is not legally enforceable.

If a complainant is concerned about animal cruelty or neglect, they will be advised to contact the RSPCA immediately. Staff will also contact the RSPCA directly to advise them of the complaint.

Keniston staff may ask the tenant to put their dog in another room when carrying out a home visit.

Permission

Residents are required to seek permission for a pet before they acquire the pet. We will only allow residents to keep pets that we consider suitable for the size of the accommodation, and in such numbers that we consider reasonable.

You do not need permission for

- Tropical fish
- Non-poisonous snakes and spiders
- Mice
- Gerbils and rabbits

Permission will not be granted for

- Farm animals
- Poisonous insects, spiders, snakes and reptiles and any other animals listed under the Dangerous wild animals Act 1976
- Dangerous Dogs – as specified under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1994
- Where there is already on-going problems with pet ownership or has been in the past.
- The size of dog will be taken into consideration when granting permission for dogs. Similarly the number of dogs and cats will be considered to prevent animal hoarding.
- Aviaries

Nuisance

The owner must ensure that the pet does not cause a nuisance and is not used in an anti-social manner

Pet nuisance includes the following:

- Roaming and unattended dogs, dogs must be kept on leads on communal areas

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- Dogs fouling in communal areas and in owners' gardens, and not being cleaned up immediately
 - Excessive noise, e.g. barking, bird squawking
 - Unpleasant odours emanating from property, due to animals fouling indoors
 - Aggressive animals posing a danger to residents and the public
 - Leaving animal food outside, thereby attracting cats, birds or other animals and causing a nuisance to other residents.
 - Damage to the property

We will investigate any complaint made about pet nuisance. We will work with our partners to promote responsible pet ownership and offer mediation. Persistent nuisance caused by pets can be classed as anti-social behaviour and will follow our processes which could result in the pet being re-homed.

Where there is damage to a property, we would expect to recharge the tenant for remedial works.

Tenant Responsibilities

We would expect pet owners to provide good conditions and look after their pets health. Dogs are required to wear a collar bearing the owner's name and address. We would expect dogs and cats to be micro chipped. We would also expect pets to be neutered to prevent indiscriminate breeding. Dog owners have a responsibility to prevent their dogs from fouling on any communal land. Dogs can cause a nuisance when they bark continuously when left alone. We would expect an assurance that a dog will not be left on its own all day while the owner is out.

Value for money

We will endeavour to ensure our services are delivered economically, effectively, and efficiently wherever possible.

Consultation

Residents and staff were consulted on this policy and will be consulted on any substantive changes.

Equality and Diversity

We will ensure that this policy is applied fairly and consistently to all our residents. We will act sensitively towards the diverse needs of individuals and communities.

This was agreed by Board on 11th December 2014

Review date: December 2017