

1. Purpose and scope

Papworth Trust believes that everyone has the right to the lawful enjoyment of their home and recognises that the companionship of pets can offer significant benefits to their owners. However, irresponsible ownership can cause a nuisance and affect the quality of life for other tenants and the local community if not managed effectively.

This policy outlines Papworth Trust's approach to responsible pet ownership and should be read in conjunction with any tenancy agreement and the anti-social behaviour policy.

The policy has considered the document 'Guidelines on Pet Management for Social Housing Providers' published by the Pet Advisory Committee and endorsed by the British Veterinary Association, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, and the Chartered Institute of Housing.

This policy covers both permanent pets and where a tenant wishes to apply for permission to temporarily have a pet in their home.

2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Provide a consistent and enforceable approach to pet ownership
- Recognise that pet ownership can be an important aspect to tenants' lives
- Ensure pet ownership does not infringe on the rights of others to the peaceful and lawful enjoyment of their home and neighbourhood
- Provide tenants with information on how to apply for a pet and how permission can be removed
- Provide tenants with information on what type of animals are acceptable as pets and in what type of accommodation
- Provide tenants with information on what behaviour is deemed acceptable and not acceptable

3. Definitions

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

4. Application and Guidance

Tenants must apply for permission to keep any pet and the Trust will not unreasonably withhold consent. Tenants wishing to own a pet must apply to the Trust for permission as part of the conditions of their tenancy before they take ownership of a pet. If the tenant is a new tenant moving into a Papworth Trust home and they already have a pet, permission must still be sought as part of the application process.

Permission will only be considered where a pet application form has been completed. A pet application form must be completed for each new pet. ('new pet' means an addition to the number of cages, hutches, tanks, free roaming animals etc. It does not for example mean you have to request permission for each new fish in a tank or bird in a cage.) The Trust will deal with requests to keep a pet sensitively bearing in mind any restrictions or conditions which may exist on any scheme or the type of accommodation.

Permission may be granted based on the following circumstances:

Small animals

Tenants may be given permission to keep small animals which are 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.

Cats

Permission to keep a cat may only be granted to tenants housed in individual ground floor accommodation with non-shared external access so that the cat may be let outside on a regular basis.

Exotic Pets (such as snakes etc)

An application for exotic pets will be refused if:

- The pet requires a licence, and the tenant does not hold one
- The pet would pose a safety risk to the household, or neighbours should it escape.

Dogs

Permission to keep a dog will not be given if the tenant enters their property through a communal entrance and/or if they do not have their own private garden. For permission to be given the tenant must have a sole entrance door and exclusive use of a garden (for the avoidance of doubt; an area of patio or similar outside a flat in an otherwise shared garden is not considered exclusive use).

The exception to this is where the animal is a guide or assistance dog, however tenants will still be required to request permission and will need to provide evidence that the animal fulfils one of these definitions.

Permission will not be given in any circumstances to keep any dog banned as part of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, as amended from time to time. This includes the Pit Bull Terrier, Japanese Tosa, Dogo Argentino, Fila Brasileiro and XL Bully.

Property Type

The Trust will consider the size of the property and garden alongside the type and size of the animal when considering whether to grant permission. This is particularly important when considering an application to keep a dog.

The Trust will not grant permission for dogs or exotic pets when a tenant resides in supported living or other shared accommodation.

Permission may be given to cats or small animals requiring hutches in supported living in certain circumstances and after careful consideration. Any request for a pet within a shared supported living home should be submitted with the support of the nominated care provider. As a minimum, the Trust would require the care provider to have risk assessed the impact of the proposed pet and consulted with all residents as part of the application.

Number of Pets

If a number of other pets already exist in the property, permission will not be given where it is deemed a new pet may affect their welfare. Health, safety, and hygiene will all be considered. Too many pets in a property may also cause a nuisance to neighbours and/or damage to the property.

Leases

Where the Trust does not possess the freehold of a property and is subject to a land or head lease, and there are provisions that preclude or restrict the ownership of pets, permission will not be granted.

Additional Housing Management Considerations

Any other relevant housing management factor may also be considered when determining whether to grant permission for a pet. Examples of this may include:

- where there is reasonable concern that the initial and ongoing cost of a pet may put the tenant into financial hardship,
- where there is existing concern over the condition of a home, and it is reasonable to conclude that the addition of a pet may worsen the condition. This includes where the addition of a pet may exacerbate damp and mould issues in a home.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive, and each application will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

5. Identification

All dogs and cats must be permanently identified by microchip or tattoo and the identification details must be registered. This identification number will be required as part of the Pet Application. To comply with current legislation, dogs and cats must also wear a collar and tag.

6. Welfare

Where permission is granted, tenants are responsible for the health and welfare of their pets. Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, this is called a duty of care. This requires proper day-to-day management and care of the pet. If tenants have any questions about the care of their pets, they should contact their vet or a suitable accredited animal welfare organisation.

Routine healthcare must include regular control of parasites (fleas and worms), vaccinations and neutering where appropriate. Owners of cats must ensure they are spayed or neutered. When applying to keep a pet, tenants may be asked to provide the name of their vet and evidence from them that their pet is regularly or appropriately treated.

No pet should be left in a Trust property when the tenant is away unless clear arrangements have been made to provide adequate care. In general, this will require the pet to be boarded elsewhere, but close supervision by a nominated individual may be adequate in some cases.

7. Prohibited Activity

Under no circumstances will permission be given to breed or offer any animal for sale from a Papworth Trust property.

Dogs must not be allowed to defecate in internal or external communal areas, including grassed areas of a neighbourhood. If a dog does defecate in a communal area, faeces must always be removed immediately.

Dogs must always be kept on a lead when in public or communal areas. They must never be let out on their own – this includes communal areas and stairwells.

Tenants have a duty to look after their pets responsibly and must not allow them to cause an unreasonable nuisance to their neighbours, Papworth Trust staff or contractors or any other member of the public. Tenants will also be held responsible for the behaviour of any pets bought into their homes or neighbourhoods by their visitors.

If a pet is found to be causing an unreasonable nuisance or annoyance, the Trust will manage any complaints in line with the Trusts Antisocial Behaviour policy. The following are examples of incidents that will be recorded and managed as antisocial behaviour:

- Excessive and persistent barking or any other loud noise causing a disturbance.
- Dogs or any other animals being used to intimidate people.
- Pets causing damage to Papworth Trust property.
- Uncontrolled behaviour of dogs whilst Trust staff are in the property.

Papworth Trust will consider taking the following action against tenants allowing their pets to cause a nuisance:

- Issuing the tenant with a verbal and written warning.
- Requesting that the tenant has the pet re-housed within days of notification.
- Reporting an incident to the Police.
- Commencing legal proceedings to obtain an injunction order.
- Commencing legal proceedings to obtain a possession order as a last resort.

8. Legislation

Listed below are the key regulations and Acts that have been considered as part of this policy:

- Housing Act 1985 and 1988
- Control of Dogs Order 1992
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Animal Welfare Act 2006
- Dangerous Dogs Act 1989 and 1991
- Dogs Act 1871
- Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
- Metropolitan Police Act 1839 and Town Police Clauses Act 1847
- Offences Against the Person Act 1861

9. Document control

Owner	Business Manager – Housing Management
Consulted	Tenant Scrutiny Panel
Approver	Senior Business Manager - Property
Date	October 2024
Next review date	August 2027

10. Version tracker

Version number	Date	Approved by	Comments/Reason for issue
1.0	March 2019		New policy
2.0	December 2020	Director of Operations	Policy review
3.0	July 2024	Senior Business Manager - Property	Policy review
4.0	October 2024	Senior Business Manager - Property	Changes to supported living permissions

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