

SP50 Pet Policy



Scope of policy

Soha understands that pet ownership can bring many benefits. This policy sets out our approach to residents who wish to keep domestic pets. It covers the types of pets that are permitted, the conditions attached to keeping pets in our homes and how we will deal with unauthorised pets and other issues related to pet ownership.

Aim

Our aim is to provide a pet-friendly and common-sense approach to residents' requests to keep a pet. We will review all applications to consider if a resident is able to keep a pet without causing nuisance or anti-social behaviour to other residents living in the community.

Definition

Within the context of this policy a pet is defined as an animal that a resident has housed inside their property or garden.

Policy Statement

The main objective is to enable people to experience the joy and fulfilment of pet ownership, in a manner that has no negative impact on anyone else. All requests will be considered on their own merits, and we will support any pet request where possible, considering any reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 even if there is an existing 'no pet policy'. There may be some instances where the law (Dangerous Dogs Act 1991(amended 1997 or Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976) or specific terms of a lease or development covenants override this policy.

Implementation

i. Permission

We allow residents to keep small, caged animals such as hamsters, insects and fish in a tank without requiring our permission. For all other pets, we will ask you to complete a pet permission form and ask you to include contact details of your veterinary practice and a nominated person who will care for your pets in case of an emergency. This will be kept on your tenancy file.

We'll consider the following when deciding whether to grant permission to keep a pet:

- a) The terms and conditions of your tenancy agreement or lease
- b) The suitability of your accommodation, including:
 - size and type of the property
 - number of pets already in the home
 - size and species of the pet
 - access to outside spaces

- communal areas
- number of pets in the block.
- c) Whether you live in an independent living or extra care scheme, and what the rules are for it
- d) The ability to care for the pet including any previous issues.
- e) Local issues relating to pets and anti-social behaviour
- f) Any breaches of tenancy impacting pet ownership
- g) Whether this is a temporary arrangement e.g., a family member is in hospital.

ii. Assistance dogs

Registered assistance dogs are not considered pets as they are essential support animals trained to help with daily activities. These dogs are provided by recognised training, charitable, or support organisations. Assistance dogs, such as guide dogs for the blind, hearing dogs for the deaf, or mobility assistance dogs, will always be permitted and are protected under the Equality Act 2010.

iii. Therapy pets

If you wish to keep a pet for therapeutic reasons and your home is within a “pet free” building, we will ask you to provide supporting information from a registered professional to enable us to consider the request.

iv. Dangerous Dogs/Wild Animals

Certain animals are not permitted under any circumstances:

- Any animal listed in the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 including large or venomous snakes and certain types of spider.
- Dogs listed in the Dangerous Dog Act 1991 Section 1. Specifically XL Bully dogs unless they hold the relevant exemption certificate.
- Farm animals. This includes but is not limited to, sheep, goats, pigs, cattle, horses, chickens, cockerels, roosters.
- Bees

If we are made aware of any resident keeping any of the animals described above, we will investigate and treat this as a breach of tenancy and may commence legal proceedings.

v. Exempted Dogs

Resident may be asked to provide additional information with the application, for example, if a dog is on the Index of Exempted Dogs, which allows the owner to keep a banned-type dog (Dangerous Dogs Act), they will need to show the dog's Certificate of Exemption; or if the pet requires a licence they will need to show proof that this is in place. In all cases, a decision will be made on a case-by-case basis.

vi. Supported & Temporary accommodation

Requests for pets will be considered on an individual basis for people living in self-contained temporary accommodation and self-contained supported accommodation. Pets are not generally allowed in communal living; however we will review each case on its individual merit.

vii. Home ownership: For leaseholders or shared ownership residents, we will consider the terms outlined in the lease or freehold transfer regarding pet ownership. Consent will not be unreasonably withheld and if a pet is required for reasons related to a disability (under the Equality Act 2010), automatic consent will be provided. If the lease or transfer is silent on the matter of pets, residents do not need to seek our permission to keep a pet.

viii. Independent Living & Extra Care/Retirement Living

Each independent living, extra care and retirement living scheme has its own policy in place and these are agreed with the residents living there. If someone wants to move in with a pet, this is usually discussed and agreed with the residents. The new resident is not normally permitted to have another pet once the original has passed.

Pets are not usually permitted in guest rooms, however please speak to the manager of the scheme for clarification.

Resident Responsibilities for Pet Care

Residents 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 Soha becomes aware of, or has any concerns about how a pet is being cared for in one of its homes, we will take steps to inform the relevant professional organisation, such as the RSPCA, and may consider prohibiting the keeping of the pet or any future pets in the home.

Withdrawing consent or refusal

There may be occasions when we may refuse permission to keep a pet or we may have to withdraw consent to keep a pet. Where keeping a pet is causing disturbance to other residents, we will act to ensure problems are resolved as quickly as possible.

Nuisance

A range of behaviours by pets can cause nuisance to neighbours, pet nuisance includes but is not limited to:

- Roaming and unattended animals.
- Pets fouling in communal areas and in neighbours' gardens.

- Excessive noise.
- Over-population of animals within a household/pet hoarding
- Aggressive animals.
- Animals that are attracting vermin.
- Animals being kept in unhygienic conditions
- Animals causing damage to Soha property

Breeding

Soha does not consent to residents breeding or selling animals on a commercial basis from any of its homes.

Enforcement

There are conditions attached to your tenancy agreement or lease agreement concerning pets. In the very rare event that a resident or applicant is advised that they cannot keep an existing pet, we will work with them to identify any animal welfare agencies who can assist in placing the pet in a new home. We recognise that this can be an extremely traumatic time and will deal with the matter sensitively, however, extreme nuisance behaviour or mistreatment of the animal(s) will – if necessary - result in a legal action to remove the pet from the home. If we ask you to rehome any pet, we'll tell you why and discuss with you a timescale for you to remove the pet from your home.

Resident Involvement

This policy was developed following consultation with residents.

Soha is committed to involving and consulting tenants, leaseholders, and shared owners and will provide every opportunity for them to be part of the decision making process in the pet policy. We will explain the pet policy at the beginning of any new let or exchange so that residents know their responsibilities in relation to keeping pets. Residents in independent living will be consulted if a resident wants to keep a pet.

Appeals

If a resident feels that Soha has unreasonably refused a pet, they may appeal to the Head of Communities to review the decision. If there is a complaint about the way that Soha has handled the request, a formal complaint can be made to Soha.

<https://soha.co.uk/contact/feedback>

Reporting

If you believe a resident may be in breach of this policy or relevant legislation, please report your concerns to the appropriate authority. This could include the RSPCA, the Police, your local council, or Soha Housing. Different agencies may have access to

both statutory and non-statutory remedies to address the issue.

Remedies (statutory)

Community Protection Warnings/notices
Civil Injunctions
Criminal Behaviour Orders
Public Space Protection Orders
Noise abatement notice (Environmental Health)

Non legal remedies:

Tenancy agreements & Lease Agreements
Good neighbour agreements
Warning letters
ABCs
Mediation

Responsibility

The Head of Communities is responsible for the effective implementation of this policy.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if legislation changes.

Context

DEFRA Dealing with irresponsible dog ownership Practitioner's manual October 2014
Animal Welfare Act 2006
Dangerous Dogs Act 1991(amended 1997)
Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
Equality Act 2010
SP01 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy 2022
Soha Pet Guidance 2025,
SP21 Antisocial Behaviour Policy
SP32 Tenancy Management Policy
SP20 Estate Management Policy
Tenancy Agreement or Lease agreement

Members' Forum Approved	15 May 2025	SLT Approved (via e-decision)	13 May 2025
EIA Completed	7 May 2025	Review Due Date	By May 2028
DPIA Checklist Completed (date)	N/A		