

LANGSTANE HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

PET POLICY

1. Introduction

The Association acknowledges that various studies have shown that keeping pets has a beneficial effect to the physical health and social wellbeing of a person.

It is also the case that irresponsible pet ownership causes a problem for neighbours and also suffering for the animals.

For this reason, the Association has a policy on pet ownership which details the conditions which apply when permission is sought to keep a pet and the position the Association will take if conditions are breached.

2. Aim

To encourage responsible pet ownership within the Association's properties, and to provide a clear framework for dealing with issues associated with pets.

3. Objectives

- To ensure that tenants who keep pets do so in such a way as to prevent adverse impact on other tenants' enjoyment of their homes
- To ensure that the keeping of pets within the Association's tenancies has no detrimental effect on either a particular tenancy, common area or neighbourhood
- To ensure that the welfare of the animal is considered when taking any decision
- To ensure that all tenants are treated equally, and no groups within the tenant population are suffering from any form of discrimination or harassment in relation to the operation of this policy

4. Animals and the law

There are many pieces of legislation relating to animals and which inform this policy. The main ones are:

- **Equalities Act 2010** – this requires that the Association does not discriminate against a person who is disabled, as this is one of the seven strands identified as a protected characteristic. This will include discrimination against any person who requires an assistance dog, such as a hearing or guide dog.
- **Animal Health and Welfare Act (Scotland) 2006** – this places a duty of care on pet owners to provide for their animal's basic needs. This means to provide food and water, veterinary treatment and a suitable living environment.

- **Dangerous Dogs Act 1991** – makes it an offence to keep specific types of dogs in the UK. These are Pit Bull Terrier, Dogo Argentino, Fila Brasileiro, and Japanese Tosa. Section 3 of this Act applies to all dogs, and makes it an offence to have a dog which is dangerously out of control. This includes incidents where there is simply a fear that injury may occur. Dog owners found guilty under this Act can be imprisoned for up to 6 months, be fined up to £5000, and also may have to have their dog destroyed.
- **Dog Fouling (Scotland Act) 2003** – makes it an offence to allow a dog to foul on any public land. Owners can be issued with fixed penalties by the local authorities and the police. These range from £40 - £60 and are issued without going through the courts.
- **Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010** - this gives the Local Authority the power to impose Dog Control Notices to put and keep a dog under proper control.
- **Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976** – this Act contains a list of all wild animals which are considered dangerous and require a license from the local authority

5. **Guidance for staff and tenants on owning pets in the Association's properties**

The Association will not unreasonably refuse to grant permission to a tenant who wishes to keep a pet. However there are a set of conditions which apply to pet ownership.

- a) **What animals can be kept?** – The Association keeps a register of pets, and written permission is required before a tenant is allowed to keep any pets in their home. Permission will normally be granted for small domestic animals and birds. Permission will not be granted for farm animals, wild animals registered under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976, or dogs specified in the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, **unless** the dog has been exempted from the prohibition by a Court Order.
- b) **How many animals can be kept in a household?** – There is guidance available to be used by staff based on the property size (Appendix 1). This will be used when assessing the number of cats and dogs allowed in a property.
- c) **Responsible pet ownership** – The Association expects that any tenant who owns a pet will ensure that the animal is well cared for and is kept under proper control both inside and outside of the property. For those tenants who keep cats and dogs in flats, the Association insists that:
 - Pet owners do not allow their pets to roam in communal areas
 - Dogs are kept on their lead in communal areas
 - Dogs are not allowed in balconies or walkways without their owners
 - Owners do not leave animal waste or cat litter trays in communal areas

- Pets are not allowed to cause noise nuisance, fouling or damage either within the tenancy or the neighbourhood
- Owners are encouraged to have their animals micro-chipped
- When outside, all dogs must wear an ID collar and ID tag with the owner's name and address inscribed on it. This is in order to comply with the law.

d) Are there any properties where pet ownership is not allowed? – Yes, the Association does not allow un-caged pets in its furnished properties. Also, in areas where there have been a lot of problems with nuisance pets, it may be that no further animals are allowed in the immediate area for a specified length of time. If a ban on new pets is imposed, all tenants in the area will be advised about this, the reason for it and the duration of the ban. Tenants can appeal against this by contacting the Director of Customer Services.

6. Pet management issues

Irresponsible pet owners will be held accountable by the Association. Staff will work together with other agencies in order to resolve any issues or problems involving animals. Examples of these other agencies include:

- The Dog Warden
- Environmental Health Department
- The Police
- Animal protection organisations such as the SSPCA

Common pet management issues include fouling, noise, strays, abandoned animals, and cases of animal neglect. There are written procedures for dealing with these pet issues.

It is possible that the Association would take legal action against a tenant where there are persistent problems involving pets causing damage or nuisance, but this is viewed as a last resort.

7. Procedures

The Association will ensure procedures are in place to facilitate a tenant's request for permission to keep a pet within their respective tenancy.

Procedures to be followed by staff are available on paper and computer format. In addition other formats can be provided by request.

The tenants' responsibilities and rights in relation to the keeping of pets are included in the Tenant Handbook. Regular articles in the Tenant Newsletter will ensure that the pet policy is well publicised.

8. Staff resources and training

The Policy is implemented by the Association's Customer Services Team.

Training includes:

- Appropriate IT skills
- Dealing with difficult situations

9. Monitoring and review

Requests to keep pets, permission processes, and issues will be monitored by the Association's Neighbourhood Services Team and will include:

- The maintenance of a Pet Permission Data Base
- The recording, investigation and finalisation of complaints received
- Regular review of all processes relating to the operation of the pet policy

Right to Complain

In the event you are not satisfied with the service you have received, please contact the Association for a copy of our Complaints Policy, which can also be viewed on our website.

Approved by Tenant's Services Sub-Committee: **2 August 2011**

Review Date: **2 August 2014**

Guidance for the number of pets allowed

It is important that the welfare of the animal is considered when looking at how many animals are allowed in a property. There is no exact calculation which can be made, but the Association has developed the following guidance, based on property size, for staff to use when considering a request to keep animals:

Bedsits – only one pet of any type is allowed

Flats – two pets allowed

Houses with their own garden area – three pets allowed

The staff should always consider the welfare of the animal when giving permission to tenants to have them in their homes, and so the following information should be considered:

- **Dogs** - need space to interact and the size of the animal matters as each animal needs space in which to lie comfortably in its own bed area. Please note that permission to keep an Assistance dog will not be refused for any property.
- **Cats** - require one litter tray each
- **House Rabbits** - allowed up to a maximum of two.
- **Caged or tanked animals** - the number of these will depend on how many other pets the tenant owns, and the size of the tank or cage which is required in order to keep the animal in the best of health.