



Ongo Homes

PET POLICY

June 2015

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1. Our policy is...

- 1.1 Under the terms of their tenancy agreement with Ongo Homes (OH), tenants have a right to enjoy their home.
- 1.2 We accept that for some tenants, this may include keeping a pet or pets, and acknowledge that many studies have shown that keeping pets can have significant health and social benefits to the owners.
- 1.3 However, we also acknowledge that irresponsible pet ownership can cause a nuisance to other tenants and staff, and suffering for the animal(s). It is therefore necessary to have some rules regarding pet ownership in place.
- 1.4 This policy outlines the rules and conditions for keeping pets in our properties. It is intended to supplement our tenancy agreements.

2. It applies to...

- 2.1 Tenants and applicants for housing, it does not apply to leaseholders. Leaseholders have different rights to own pets which are set out in their lease agreement.
- 2.2 This policy will be applied to all new and transferring tenants from September 2012.
- 2.3 Where a tenancy commenced before September 2012:

Flat with communal entrance	Permission will be granted for existing pets (as at September 2012) unless there is an ongoing problem with pet ownership or there has been a problem in the past. However, any new or additional pets from September 2012 will need permission subject to the restrictions set out in 4.3
Other types of properties	Tenants can assume permission is granted for existing pets (as at September 2012) unless there is an ongoing problem with pet ownership or there has been a problem in the past. However, any new or additional pets from September 2012 will need permission subject to the restrictions set out in 4.3

3. Because we want to...

- ✓ Ensure that controls and procedures are in place that allow tenants to keep pets whilst ensuring that other people are not adversely affected;
- ✓ Encourage responsible pet ownership;
- ✓ Ensure issues of pet nuisance, cruelty or neglect are dealt with appropriately and effectively.

4. We will...

4.1 Ask you to request permission to keep a pet

4.1.1 Tenants must request permission from us before buying or obtaining any type of pet.

4.1.2 Registered assistance animals do not require permission. However, tenants are still responsible for the behaviour and welfare of the animal, and they must give us the animal's details.

4.1.3 If a tenant is found to be keeping a pet or pets without our permission, they must obtain permission from their housing officer. Where permission is refused, the tenant must re-home the pet within a time limit agreed with their housing officer. We will support the tenant by signposting to relevant agencies who can assist.

4.1.4 Where permission is granted, the tenant must agree to abide by the conditions set out in section 4.2.

4.1.5 Applications will be considered on an individual basis and will take into account factors such as:

- ✓ The size and suitability of the property;
- ✓ The type, size and number of animal(s);
- ✓ The type and size of fish tank;
- ✓ The type and size of proposed pet accommodation;
- ✓ Availability of garden or proximity of other exercise and toileting area;
- ✓ History of previous or current pet ownership;
- ✓ Ability of the tenant to ensure the welfare of the animal(s);
- ✓ Guidance from professionals such as vets, animal charities or relevant North Lincolnshire Council officers.

4.1.6 Tenants wishing to construct outside accommodation for a pet must apply for prior written permission. This would be granted only where the property had a garden for the tenant's sole use. Any such application must include details of the type of animal to be housed and plans of the proposed construction.



4.1.7 Applicants for housing will be asked if they intend to keep, or have, a pet. This will not prejudice their application unless they plan to keep a pet for which permission will not be granted. If this is the case, the matter must be resolved before the tenancy agreement is signed.

4.1.8 If an existing pet dies then a tenant must request permission before buying or obtaining a new pet.

4.2 Conditions of pet ownership

4.2.1 Tenants must have obtained all necessary permits and licences before obtaining a pet and asking for permission.

4.2.2 Where permission is given by us, tenants will be sent a 'Permissions letter' which will clearly state the conditions under which permission has been given. If a problem arises, we may ask the tenant to sign a formal 'Pet Contract' confirming they will abide by this policy and the conditions of responsible pet ownership explained below.

4.2.3 Tenants must provide us with contact details of their veterinary practice and a nominated person who will care for their pets in the case of an emergency.

4.2.4 Tenants are responsible for the behaviour of any pets owned by themselves or by anyone living with them or visiting them. They must ensure that pets are supervised, kept under control and do not cause nuisance or annoyance to neighbours and visitors. This includes fouling, noise and odours from pets.

4.2.5 Dogs must always be kept on a lead when visiting common areas or OH owned grounds and not allowed outside a tenant's property unaccompanied unless within an enclosed garden area.

4.2.6 Tenants must ensure their pets do not cause damage or deterioration to their house, their neighbour's property, any other OH owned property, any common parts, or any garden or landscaped areas. We will require that any such damage is either made good by the tenant or it will be treated as a rechargeable repair.

4.2.7 Tenants must ensure that at all times, their pets and pet accommodation is kept clean and tidy. All urine, faeces and litter must be cleared immediately and disposed of responsibly.

4.2.8 Dogs must by law wear a collar with the owner's name and address on when in a public place and we recommend they are micro-chipped (this will become a legal requirement from 6 April 2016).

4.2.9 Tenants are legally responsible for the health and welfare of any pet and they must ensure it has a suitable environment, a suitable diet, receives sufficient exercise, is able



to exhibit normal behaviour patterns and is protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease. The animal's need to be housed with or apart from other animals should also be considered.

- 4.2.10 Tenants must ensure that their pet receives veterinary attention where necessary, standard routine healthcare, such as vaccinations and regular parasite control measures, as well as appropriate treatment for any illness(es).
- 4.2.11 Tenants must make suitable provision for a pet should they become unable to take care of it, either on a temporary or permanent basis. In such circumstances, if this has not been done staff will contact the appropriate authorities to arrange for the care of a pet e.g. RSPCA. The tenant will be recharged for all costs incurred.
- 4.2.12 Tenants must not normally leave any uncaged pet(s) alone in the property for any length of time if they are away, and never overnight, unless clear, suitable arrangements have been made to provide adequate care. In general, pets would require to be boarded elsewhere, however close supervision by a friend or neighbour may be adequate for some types of animals.
- 4.2.13 Tenants are prohibited from breeding or selling animals on a commercial basis from any of our properties.
- 4.2.14 Pets are not permitted in any communal lounges or guest bedrooms, except in the case of assistance animals.
- 4.2.15 We reserve the right to impose any other condition on a specific case where it is felt to be appropriate in the interests of other tenants, staff, or the animal itself.

4.3 Reasons for refusing permission to keep pets

- 4.3.1 Permission will not be granted for Dogs listed by the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, any animal listed in the Schedule of the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976, and any animal prohibited by any other law.
- 4.3.2 Permission will not be granted for a tenant to keep livestock or farm animals, for example sheep, goats, pigs, cattle, horses, cockerel and ducks. Chickens may be permitted if the tenant can demonstrate effective management.
- 4.3.3 Permission will not be granted for dogs or cats in flats or sheltered accommodation unless the property has its own door with direct access outside to the ground floor.
- 4.3.4 If when a dog or cat dies and the tenant is living in a flat, maisonette or sheltered property without its own door with direct access outside, permission will not be granted even if the tenant had permission for a previous pet.

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- 4.3.5 Permission will not be granted if we consider the number of pets a tenant has to be excessive or likely to cause a nuisance. Officers will be issued with guidance regarding property type/size which can be found in Appendix One.
- 4.3.6 Permission will not be granted for a tenant to keep a pet where we receive advice that the environment is unsuitable.
- 4.3.7 Where it is our opinion that a tenant is unable to look after the welfare of a pet and fulfil their responsibility for keeping it under control, permission will only be granted where the tenant can evidence that alternative arrangements will be put in place to meet the conditions set out at section 4.2. Permission would not be granted if we are of the opinion that the pet would be at risk of suffering.
- 4.3.8 We will consider any history of pet ownership the tenant may have when reaching a decision. Permission may be refused where records show a previous history of neglect or cruelty; or instances of irresponsible pet ownership, such as failure to control or clean up after an animal.
- 4.3.9 If a tenant disagrees with a decision made, they can submit a complaint using our *Complaints And Feedback Policy*.

4.4 Action we can take if conditions for keeping a pet are broken

- 4.4.1 If any of the conditions stated at section 4.2 are broken, appropriate action will be taken either by us or by referral to a relevant outside agency (e.g. RSPCA, North Lincolnshire Council, Police).
- 4.4.2 We will investigate any issues raised according to Breach of Tenancy Procedures and/or the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy/Procedures as appropriate. Where a complaint is upheld following investigation, the tenant will be given the opportunity to rectify the situation and undertake remedial action as agreed with us.
- 4.4.3 We aim to ensure that tenants receive advice and support on pet management issues necessary to help them keep their pet and resolve any problems to the satisfaction of all parties concerned.
- 4.4.4 We reserve the right to withdraw permission and require the removal of a pet:
- ✓ Which is causing nuisance or damage and the tenant has either been unable to remedy the situation, or has refused to take any remedial action;
 - ✓ Where a tenant has been negligent in their care of a pet or where a tenant can no longer meet the basic welfare needs of a pet, e.g. clean conditions, removal of faeces.
- 4.4.5 In such cases, the tenant must make arrangements for the pet's permanent removal from the property within one month of the permission being withdrawn.

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- 4.4.6 Legal action, such as applying for an injunction or eviction, would only be taken as a last resort where a tenant refused to co-operate to address concerns in relation to a pet, or where a problem could not be managed and no other course of action was available.
- 4.4.7 If a tenant was being evicted, we will make every effort to determine the presence of a pet or pet(s) and ensure the tenant had made suitable arrangements for them. However, if pets were found to have been left behind in a property, we would contact the appropriate authorities to arrange for their safe removal and care. The same action would apply in the case of abandonment. The tenant will be recharged for all costs incurred.
- 4.4.8 We will notify the appropriate authorities if it is found that a tenant has neglected a pet's welfare, or mistreated or caused unnecessary suffering to a pet. In such cases, permission to keep a pet may be withdrawn.

4.5 Encouraging responsible pet ownership

4.5.1 We aim to encourage responsible pet ownership by the following means:

- ✓ Recommending that pets receive veterinary attention, advice or treatment where necessary;
- ✓ Making it a breach of tenancy, if a tenant or a person residing at the property is prosecuted and found guilty of cruelty to an animal;
- ✓ Recommending that pets are micro chipped/tattooed;
- ✓ Highlighting to tenants the benefits of neutering their animals and encouraging them to discuss this with their vet;
- ✓ Giving information to tenants about the benefits of pet insurance;
- ✓ Encouraging tenants to undertake training of a pet, where appropriate.
- ✓ Encouraging tenants to take into account what animal would fit in with their lifestyle and be realistic about their physical abilities when considering getting a pet;
- ✓ Providing tenants with an information leaflet highlighting the responsibilities of pet owners and the action we may take to deal with nuisances caused by pets or cases of cruelty/neglect, as well as providing general advice on pet ownership.



5. Making sure we do what we say...

- 5.1 The Head of Housing Management is responsible for making sure everyone implements and sticks to this policy.
- 5.2 Service managers and senior officers are responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented on a day-to-day basis.
- 5.3 All staff are responsible for ensuring they are familiar with, and adhere to, this policy.
- 5.4 Any complaints regarding pets will be recorded and monitored. Any trends or issues identified will be used in the policy review process along with other feedback to ensure the policy remains appropriate and effective.

6. Other things to bear in mind are...

- 6.1 Our policies on...
 - ✓ Anti-Social Behaviour;
 - ✓ Complaints and Feedback;
 - ✓ Lettings;
 - ✓ Pet Procedures;
 - ✓ Recharge;
 - ✓ Tenancy Management;
 - ✓ Tenancy Agreement.
- 6.2 A number of pieces of legislation and guidance have informed this policy including:
 - ✓ [Animal Welfare Act 2006](#);
 - ✓ [Control of Dogs Order 1992](#);
 - ✓ [Dangerous Dogs Act 1991](#);
 - ✓ [Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976](#);
 - ✓ [Equality Act 2010](#);
 - ✓ [Housing Act 1988 \(as amended 1996\)](#);
 - ✓ [Offences Against the Person Act 1861](#);
 - ✓ [Practical Guidelines on Pet Management for Housing Providers](#);
 - ✓ [Section 34 and 35 of the Policing and Crime Act 2009](#);
 - ✓ [Tackling ASB: Tools and Powers for Social Landlords](#).
 - ✓ DEFRA Guidance: Dealing with Irresponsible Dog Ownership (Oct, 2014)

7. We'll look at this again...

- 8.1 In three years time or sooner if anything changes.

8. What we mean...

Word	Explanation
Tenant	For the purpose of this policy, 'tenant' refers to tenants and applicants for housing.
Registered Assistance animals	Such as guide dogs for the blind, hearing dogs for the deaf, or dogs for the disabled.
Pet nuisance	Includes but is not limited to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Roaming and unattended animals;✓ Fouling in communal areas and gardens, and not being cleaned up immediately;✓ Excessive noise, e.g. barking;✓ Unpleasant odours emanating from a property due, for example, to animals fouling indoors;✓ Aggressive animals;✓ Over-population of animals within a household.
Dangerous Dogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">× Pit Bull Terrier× Japanese Tosa× Dogo Argentino× Fila Brasileiro <p>It is important to note that in the UK, dangerous dogs are classified by 'type', not by breed label.</p>
Dangerous wild animals	Various animals including certain types of venomous snakes, spiders and breeds of monkey. A copy of the schedule to the Act listing all of the animals included can be found here: http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-pets/dangerous-wild-animals/
Pet accommodation	Relates to any structure intended to house animals including kennels, hutches, pigeon lofts, fish ponds etc.

Appendix One – Guidance on pet number limits and type of property

Officers should consider the following guideline limits regarding the number of pets which can be kept by property type when deciding whether to grant permission for a pet:

Type of property	Number of pets
General needs houses and bungalows with their own gardens 1-2 bedrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maximum of 2 pets
Larger family home 3/4/5 bedrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maximum of 3 pets
Ground floor flats and cottage flats with their own door leading directly outside	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maximum of 2 pets
Flats/Maisonettes with a communal entrance only (i.e. no direct access outside to the ground floor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No dogs or cats but up to 2 caged animals.• Maximum fish tank size of up to 155 litres (34 gallons)
Sheltered or retirement bungalows	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maximum of 2 pets
Sheltered scheme flats with communal entrance only (i.e. no direct access outside to the ground floor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No dogs or cats but up to 2 caged animals• Maximum fish tank size of up to 155 litres (34 gallons)