

Pet Policy



Policy Reference:

RL016

Approved by:

Senior Management Team

Date approved:

23 April 2019

A Scope and Objectives

This Policy sets out the approach that bpha will use when considering permission for residents to keep pets in their homes. The definition of a pet is ‘a domestic or tamed animal kept for companionship or pleasure’.

B Policy Statement

bpha manages many different types of housing product including general needs, shared ownership, retirement living, leasehold, and intermediate rent.

bpha recognises that residents may wish to have pets in their homes. This policy aims to provide a fair approach to balance the benefits to the individual of keeping pets with the potential that pets may have a negative impact on other residents.

In all cases decisions on permissions for residents to have pets will be made after reviewing the tenancy agreement, contract or lease, to ensure that we and our residents are meeting our contractual requirements.

bpha will require good tenancy conduct to be demonstrated before giving permission for pets in the property. It is important that the resident has a good record of making rent and/or charge payments, because responsible pet ownership will lead to extra expense which could lead to arrears.

Approving/Refusing Permission

Permission for pets in general needs accommodation should be obtained by contacting bpha customer services on phone: 0330 100 0272, email: info@bpha.org.uk, text: 07983 502 502 or at Customer Service, bpha Limited Head Office, Bedford Heights, Manton Lane, Bedford, MK41 7BJ.

Permission for pets in retirement living properties must be obtained from the Team Leader.

bpha will permit residents to keep pets in line with conditions set out in their tenancy or lease agreement. A small number of caged animals such as hamsters, guinea pigs, or birds may be kept without seeking written permission, but written permission is required for other animals.

bpha will not allow residents to have an excessive number of pets. In determining an excessive number, we will consider the property size, type and facilities, the type and number of animals and the ability of the owner to look after the welfare of their pets.

Animal welfare is the customer's responsibility and bpha will take no responsibility for an animal's welfare either whilst the pet is in the property or when we've asked for the pet to be removed. If there are any concerns raised bpha will refer the matter to the relevant organisation.

Permission **will not** be granted for the following animals:

- Livestock such as sheep, goats, pigs etc.
- Poisonous or venomous creatures.
- Wild animals as defined under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 such as venomous snakes or certain types of spider.
- Dogs as specified in the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 including animals granted a certificate of exemption under that Act. This Act is now updated by the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. Dogs included are; Pitbull Terrier, Japanese Tosa, Dogo Argentino, and Fila Brasileiro.
- Any other animal which is not listed above and may be unsuitable for the property or scheme.

No dogs are permitted in retirement living properties, with the exception of assistance dogs in suitable properties.

A scheme can be classified as a no pet scheme by approval from the Regional Managers and this would be kept under review on a regular basis.

Permission may not be granted in general needs housing if there is a particular scheme or block which has experienced problems with animals, or if the property does not have direct access to the outdoors.

Permission for a pet may not be granted if there is a history of inadequate or detrimental pet ownership by the resident.

In some cases bpha may seek to consult with residents of a block to reach a consensus on whether to allow cats or dogs or other animals (not listed above) to be kept. These cases may include blocks where residents have not had permission to keep pets previously.

In some cases, the animal may be banned from certain areas, such as cafeterias.

Complaints about Animals

We may receive complaints about animals for reasons such as noise nuisance from barking, fouling in communal areas or aggressive animals. bpha takes such complaints seriously and Home Agents or Team Leaders will investigate complaints.

The complaint may be of a nature that we have to revoke permission for the pet and request the owner suitably re-houses the pet. Legal action will be taken to enforce removal of the pet if the customer does not remove the pet within specified timescales. Further legal action may include action against their tenancy as appropriate, up to and including possession action.

If an animal causes a threat or harm to anyone including employees, volunteers or contractors working for or on behalf of bpha, enforcement action will be taken.

Assistance dogs

Written permission is not required for an assistance dog, however evidence may be requested such as an Assistance Dogs (UK) branded ID book.

C Regulatory and legal considerations

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991
- The Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
- The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Animal Welfare Act 2006

D Monitoring, reviews and evaluation

This policy and associated procedure will be reviewed regularly. The implementation and success of this policy will be evaluated by regular monitoring of individual cases and monthly reporting of overall case management to the Head of Housing Operations.

E Associated documents and procedures

- Anti-social behaviour procedure
- Pet procedure
- Individual tenancy agreements

Status	Version 2
Responsible	George Parkinson
Equality impact issues	None
Next review date	August 2019