

Policy and procedure

Pets

Policy author (name and title)	Business Improvement Team
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Board / Committee approval date	
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Next review date	August 2027
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Has this policy been signed off by the Client Forum (if applicable)?	Yes: 1 August 2024
Affected	All staff and clients

Values

<p>Respect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value diversity and fairness Act with honesty and integrity Treat people with care and compassion 	<p>Empowerment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the needs of each individual Encourage personal development and independence Provide safety, stability and security
<p>Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work together, in partnership Take responsibility for our actions Continue learning and improving 	<p>Excellence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a first-class service Deliver excellent value for money Explore innovative ways of working



Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Policy statement.....	2
3. Pet owners' responsibilities	3
4. Permission to keep pets.....	4
5. Restrictions	5
6. What if there is a problem?	6
7. Temporary moves (decants)	6
8. Other relevant Transform policies	6
Form: Request for permission to keep a pet.....	7

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Policy outlines our approach to dealing with animals/pets in client's homes.
- 1.2. We recognise that pets bring happiness and comfort to customers' lives, helping their owners through difficult times and improving their mental and physical wellbeing. As a social landlord we will not unreasonably refuse permission for customers to keep pets.
- 1.3. Many of Transform's houses are shared with other people or have communal spaces, including gardens and shared access. We therefore need to balance the preferences, needs, wellbeing and safety of all clients.
- 1.4. We encourage responsible pet ownership. It is important to recognise the positive impact pets can have, while ensuring they don't negatively affect others or cause a nuisance.
- 1.5. A pet is defined as a domesticated animal or bird that you have at home for pleasure, rather than one that is kept for work or food.

2. Policy statement

- 2.1. Your tenancy or licence agreement should set out if we allow pets and if you need permission. The "**Request Permission to Keep a Pet**" form is appendix 1 of this policy.
- 2.2. In some blocks, even where you have a self-contained property, if we do not own the freehold, we will be bound by the rules of the freeholder and what is in our agreement with them. If you live in such a block or if you're unsure what is in your agreement, you should ask us to check for you.
- 2.3. If you move to your home from another Transform property your request to keep an animal/pet will be assessed in line with 4.1 and 4.2 of this policy regardless of the outgoing client's circumstances and any animals/pets they keep.
- 2.4. We encourage responsible pet ownership, in accordance with the Animal Welfare Act 2006. We will involve the RSPCA immediately where we suspect animal cruelty or neglect and encourage anyone who reports concerns about a pet to us, to do the same.
- 2.5. We will contact the RSPCA if you have a court order banning you from keeping animals and we are aware you have animals at the property.
- 2.6. Before making the commitment to own a pet and requesting permission to keep it at your home, we ask that you consider the impact on your home, your finances, your neighbours and the animal itself.

3. Pet owners' responsibilities

- 3.1. You must keep animals/pets in a reasonable manner and not allow them to cause a nuisance to anyone or cause damage to your home. You must not keep, or allow visitors to bring to your home, any livestock or animal classed as wild or dangerous in law.
- 3.2. We may ask you to keep animals/pets in a separate room when we visit your home e.g. contractors visiting to carry out a repair.
- 3.3. Animals must not be kept for the purposes of breeding or sale.
- 3.4. As identified in 4.1, the number of pets you can keep may be limited to ensure that there are no issues of overcrowding with potential implications for the health of the animals, people or the upkeep and condition of the property.

Dogs (including those visiting with friends or family) should not be kept outside for long periods and must be kept on a lead at all times in communal areas of our buildings and grounds. No dogs listed in the Dangerous Dog Act 1991 - Section 1 are allowed in Transform properties, including those belonging to visitors.

- 3.5. Animals must not be tied up on residential property or in communal areas.
- 3.6. You must not leave animals unattended for a period of time that will result in the welfare needs of the animal not being met and should have suitable arrangements in place for their care if you go away.
- 3.7. Animals should have regular routine healthcare including vaccinations and regular control of parasites (e.g. fleas and worms) where appropriate.
- 3.9. You are responsible for cleaning up after your pet within your property and in any gardens, pathways and/or communal areas.
- 3.8. In the event your pet sadly passes away it must not be buried anywhere on Transform's property or communal grounds.
- 3.9. Failure to meet these expectations may be a breach of your Licence or Tenancy Agreement.

4. Permission to keep pets

4.1. You must live in a property with its own entrance and/ or access to its own garden before you can keep uncaged domestic pets (such as a dog or cat) unless there is a special exemption such as a guide dog or assistance/ therapy animal.

4.2. You must obtain our permission before you get a pet (using the form at the end of this policy) if you:

- Live in a house, bungalow or ground floor flat with its own garden and you would like to have an animal/pet (except small pets, such as hamsters, gerbils and goldfish)
- Live in a self-contained flat and you would like to have an animal/pet (except small pets, such as hamsters, gerbils and goldfish)
- Live in a shared house or flat with other people and want to have an animal/ pet including small pets such as reptiles, hamsters or gerbils or bird.
- Live in self-contained property (including those with their own garden) and want to install dog or cat flaps - we need to check the flaps will not affect the door's fire safety. If a dog/cat flap is installed without permission and causes damage to the fabric of the door, we may recharge the cost of any repair or replacement. If permission is granted, you should contact your home insurer before installing the flap as it could invalidate your insurance by making the door less secure.
- If energy efficient doors have been installed at your property, it will not be possible to install a cat flap or dog flap as this would invalidate the warranty. Depending on the type of energy efficient door and the property you live in, it may be possible for us to look at alternatives and these will be considered on a case-by-case basis when your application is received.

4.3. Permission will take into account the following:

- The terms and conditions of your tenancy or licence agreement
- The suitability of the accommodation:
 - size and type of the property
 - size and species of the pet or the number of pets you already have
 - communal areas.
- Your ability to care for the animal/pet including any previous issues if you previously had animals/pets (this also includes if you or another member of your household have previously left an animal behind when moving out of any Transform property)
- Your financial circumstances as it is important you are able to afford to look after your pet in terms of feed, equipment, medical checks and expenses – which could include having insurance to cover these costs and any damage your pet might cause to your home, Transform's property and other people.

- Local issues relating to animals/pets and anti-social behaviour
 - Any breaches of tenancy/ licence relating to noise
 - If you or another household member has any convictions for, or past history of abandonment, cruelty, neglect or mistreatment of animals, or convictions for any offences under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 or has been disqualified from keeping animals or a particular type of animal due to a conviction.
 - The views of other people sharing the property
- 4.4. We will grant permission for an assistance dog (unless it is listed in the Dangerous Dog Act 1991 - Section 1) with supporting documentation.
- 4.5. Where we discover an animal/pet is being kept without our knowledge, it may be possible in some circumstances to obtain retrospective consent to keep the pet. However, the decision will be subject to whether we are satisfied that the conditions for keeping an animal/pet can be met in accordance with the criteria outlined in this policy.
- 4.6. If you feel we have refused a request for an animal/pet unfairly, you can appeal by following our Complaints Policy

5. Restrictions

- 5.1. We will not allow you to keep:
- Any animal listed in the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 including large or venomous snakes and certain types of spiders
 - Dogs listed in the Dangerous Dog Act 1991 - Section 1 (Please note from 31 December 2023 XL Bully dogs were added to the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.)
 - Farm animals e.g. sheep, goats, pigs, cattle, horses, cockerels
 - Bees
 - Any animal listed in the Endangered Species (Import & Export) Act 1976

6. What if there is a problem?

6.1. We will ask you to rehome your animal/pet(s) if:

- You are keeping animal/pet(s) where we wouldn't give permission or refused your request
- Where your animal/pet ownership is proven to be a risk to their own personal health and safety
- Your animal/pet is causing a nuisance and you are not working with us to resolve this
- Your animal/pet is causing a nuisance and there are no further options to solve this
- Your animal/pet attacks or injures other animals or people
- Your pet is causing damage to the property or the condition of your property is unhygienic because of your animals/pets
- You have too many animals/pets in your home.

6.2. If we ask you to rehome any animal/pet, we will tell you why and discuss a timescale with you to remove the animal/pet from your home. We will confirm our agreement in writing.

6.3. We expect you to engage with us and help resolve problems. We may take possession proceedings for breach of tenancy if you fail to put right any problems or fail to rehome your animal/pet within a reasonable time.

6.4. As identified in 2.3, we will involve the RSPCA immediately where we suspect animal cruelty or neglect and encourage anyone who reports concerns about a pet to us to do the same.

7. Temporary moves (decants)

7.1. If a property becomes uninhabitable or inaccessible due to emergency situations such as fires and floods, or due to major works that cannot be completed with you in situ we will try and source accommodation that allows pets. However, if this is not possible, we will initially seek to establish if it is possible for friends or family members to house the pets on a short-term basis (2-3 days). If this is not possible, we will meet the cost of rehoming the pets for the duration of the reactive or planned move. We do not include pets as members of a household, and we cannot guarantee that any temporary accommodation offered will allow them.

8. Other relevant Transform policies

8.1. Other Transform policies that may be relevant to this policy are:

- Complaints Policy
- Decant Policy

Form: Request for permission to keep a pet

Name:			
Address:			
Are there any shared areas and facilities in your home?			
Please include shared gardens, shared front doors, stairs/ lifts, halls and passageways			
Type of pet permission is being requested for:			
Arrangements in place			
Please confirm you have the following arrangements in place and provide details:			
Insurance cover (for your pet and for any harm or damage it might cause to other residents, staff or Transform's property):			
Budget for any other vets bills/treatment not covered by your insurance:			
Budget for food:			
Arrangements for the pet if you are not able to care for it (e.g. you need to go out to work, you are unwell or in hospital, you have to go away from the property):			
Any other information:			
You are agreeing that you will maintain these arrangements at all times and understand that a failure to do so may result in you being asked to rehome your pet.			
Signature of applicant:			Date:

Consideration and decision by Transform

- There is/ is not insurance cover in place
- There is/ is not evidence that the applicant can afford to feed and maintain the wellbeing of the animal
- There are/ are not areas shared with other Transform clients or neighbours
- The wellbeing, comfort or safety of other clients and neighbours is/ is not affected
- There are/ are not robust arrangements in place to care for the animal if the applicant is not able to, for both the short and long term
- The animal is/ is not on the list of pets we will not permit to be kept

Permission is granted

Yes

No

Any additional conditions/ information:

Date:

Name of Transform Manager:

Signature: