

Pets Policy	
Approved by Executive Director of Housing	Issue number 8
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	Executive Sponsor Executive Director of Housing
Previous Version N/A	Responsible Officer Head of Housing

1.	<p>Aims and Objectives</p> <p>This policy sets out how Hightown manages pets in our homes.</p> <p>Hightown recognises that responsible pet ownership can bring significant benefits to customer' wellbeing. Pets can provide companionship, reduce loneliness, support mental health, and promote physical activity.</p> <p>This policy seeks to balance the wellbeing benefits of responsible pet ownership with the need to protect animal welfare and ensure that pets are only kept where accommodation is suitable and where they do not cause nuisance, distress, or health and safety risks to other customers.</p>
2.	<p>Definitions and Scope</p> <p>This policy applies to any animal kept in or visiting a Hightown property that could potentially cause a nuisance to other residents, or raises health and safety issues.</p> <p>This policy applies to all of Hightown's Rented, Shared Ownership, Leasehold and Care and Supported Housing properties.</p> <p>On occasions when Hightown is not the freeholder, the Association is required to comply with the terms in the lease applicable to those properties. The lease terms will always override any discretion which may be incorporated in this policy.</p>
3.	<p>Basic principles</p> <p>Hightown supports responsible pet ownership where the property is suitable and where doing so does not negatively impact other customers.</p> <p>Requests to keep any pet will be considered on a case-by-case basis. In assessing whether a property is suitable for a pet, Hightown will consider</p>

factors such as the type of property, access to outdoor space, proximity to communal areas, the size and type of pet, the number of animals, and the known behaviour of the animal.

Customers must obtain written permission from Hightown for the pet/s.

In general, dogs will not be permitted in flats or other properties where there are no private gardens, or properties with shared entrances or communal gardens.

Certain animals, including dog breeds banned under UK legislation, are not permitted in our properties for safety reasons. Permission for any banned or dangerous animal will not be granted. If we become aware that a banned or unsafe animal is being kept at one of our homes, we may refer the matter to the Police, and the animal will be required to be removed. Failure to comply may result in tenancy enforcement action in line with the terms of the tenancy or lease agreement

The keeping of chickens, pigeons or similar animals, including when kept as pets, is generally not permitted in our properties due to potential noise, waste and pest issues. Any request to keep such animals must be made in writing, and the Association may refuse permission based on property type, location, welfare needs, or potential nuisance. Specialist structures such as coops, cotes or lofts are not permitted unless specifically authorised. Unauthorised animals or structures must be removed if requested.

Assistance animals are not considered pets and permission will always be granted. This includes guide dogs, hearing dogs and other accredited assistance animals. Hightown will make reasonable adjustments to support applicants and residents who rely on such animals.

Where applicable, applicants for housing are advised if the property they are applying for would not be eligible for permission for pets. The general needs housing application form asks if any pets are owned so that this can be highlighted in advance of the applicant deciding whether to accept an offer of accommodation.

Hightown's tenancy agreements and some leases contain clauses on the keeping and behaviour of pets, and on nuisance in general.

Estate regulations give general guidance. However, the lease or tenancy agreement will override any information given in these documents.

On mixed tenure estates, Hightown will generally expect that tenants and leaseholders are treated in the same way in relation to permission for pets.

Customers who wish to keep a pet in their home may do so if the property is deemed suitable, the tenancy agreement allows for pets and, where Hightown is not the freeholder, any headlease does not prohibit keeping pets.

Leaseholders may keep a pet if their lease allows it.

Where permission is granted for a dog, the customer must:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep any dogs on a lead and under control outside the property. • Not allow dogs to foul the common areas or gardens, and ensure that any fouling is picked up and disposed of appropriately • Not allow dogs to frighten or annoy other residents. • Not take dogs into play areas. • Not allow dogs to create unreasonable noise or smells. <p>Where permission for a pet has been granted, if the pet causes a nuisance or annoyance to neighbours or others, Hightown may withdraw permission to allow the customer to keep it.</p> <p>Where permission is withdrawn, if the pet is not re-homed within a set timescale, Hightown may pursue legal action against the tenant.</p> <p>If a member of Hightown staff is concerned about the behaviour of animals, their wellbeing or the conditions in which they are being kept, they should contact the local authority officer responsible for the welfare of animals. Alternatively, if cruelty or neglect is suspected the staff member should discuss the case with their line manager before contacting the RSPCA.</p> <p>If a customer abandons a pet in a property following the end of a tenancy, agencies such as the RSPCA or Local authority Environmental Health or Blue Cross should be contacted to collect the animal for rehoming.</p>
4.	<p>Other considerations: Hightown will periodically publicise the Pets Policy through articles in the Residents' newsletter and on the website.</p>
5.	<p>Role and Responsibilities/Authority It is the responsibility of the relevant Lettings Officer, Housing Officer, Home Ownership Officer or Support Worker to ensure that this policy is implemented.</p>