

Title:	Pet Policy
Person responsible:	Housing Services Manager
Customer consultation arrangement:	Consultation required? Yes ☒ No ☐ If no, please explain why:
EIA required:	Yes
EIA completed (date):	January 2026
Approved by:	Policy Approval Working Group
Business Strategy Theme	Quality Homes, Quality Services, Quality People
Approval date:	January 2026
Links to other key policies:	Anti-Social Behaviour Policy Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Good Neighbourhood Management Policy Unacceptable Behaviour Policy Tenancy Management Policy Recharge Policy
Review date:	January 2029

Document management		
Version	Date amended	Amendments
1	July 2018	Original
2	January 2026	Updated to reflect current legislation and good practice
3	April 2026	Updated following restructure, changes to job role titles and responsibilities.

1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 This policy sets out the rules and responsibilities for pet ownership within South Lakes Housing (SLH) homes and ensures compliance with tenancy agreements, relevant legislation, and best practice in animal welfare.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to:
- **Promote Responsible Pet Ownership** – Ensuring that residents who keep pets, do so responsibly, safeguarding the well-being of both animals and the community.
 - **Protect Residents & Colleagues** – Minimise the risks associated with pets, including noise, allergies, hygiene and any aggressive behaviour.

- **Preserve Property & Environment** – Prevent damage to SLH properties and maintain communal areas to a high standard.
- **Support Wellbeing** – Recognise the positive impact pets can have on residents mental and physical health, whilst balancing the needs of all residents.
- **Ensure Compliance** – Align with legal and regulatory requirements, including tenancy agreements and relevant legislation.

1.3 The scope of this policy will:

- **Apply to all SLH properties** – Including general needs homes, Independent living homes, leasehold & shared ownership homes.
- **Cover all types of pets** – Including (but not limited to) cats, dogs, small caged animals, birds, fish, reptiles and assistance animals.
- **Include pet ownership conditions** – for example;
 - Number & type of pets allowed
 - Permissions and registration process
 - Responsibilities of pet owners (e.g waste disposal, control of pets in communal areas)
 - XL Bullys, Banned Breeds, Dangerous pets
- **Support Partnership working** – With the Police, Local Authority and any local animal welfare organisations where needed (e.g rehoming support).

2. Regulatory and Legislative Requirements

2.1 The principal legislation applicable to this policy is:

- Animal Welfare Act 2006
- Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
- Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, amended 2023
- Dangerous Dogs (Designated Types) (England and Wales) Order 2023
- Control of Dogs Order 1992
- Dogs Act 1871
- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018

South Lakes Housing are aware of the need to be flexible in our approach in terms of our response to any future changes to legislation and regulation including the Renters Rights Bill.

3. Definitions

3.1 “You” / “Your” – refers to the tenant(s), leaseholder(s), or resident(s) of the property.

- 3.2 “We” / “Us” / “Our” – refers to South Lakes Housing (SLH), including its colleagues, contractors, and representatives acting on behalf of the organisation
- 3.3 Domestic Animal – For the purposes of this policy, a domestic animal is an animal that has been bred and kept by humans for companionship or utility and is commonly regarded as suitable to live in a home environment. This includes species such as dogs, cats, rabbits, small, caged birds, hamsters, guinea pigs, and fish. It does not include livestock (e.g. pigs, goats, sheep, cattle, or horses), wild animals, or any animal classed as dangerous under legislation

4. Our Approach

- 4.1 SLH recognises the positive impact pets can have on residents’ wellbeing, companionship, and quality of life. We are committed to enabling responsible pet ownership while ensuring that our properties, communal areas, and neighbourhoods remain safe, clean, and enjoyable for all residents.
- 4.2 It is important to note that some Independent Living Schemes have different guidance and this is covered in the specific section later in the policy.

4.3 What we allow

- 4.3.1 You can have small pets without asking our permission. Small pets include hamsters, gerbils, mice, guinea pigs, and other small rodents. You’re also allowed to keep small fish in an indoor tank.
- 4.3.2 If you live in a home with its own entrance and private garden, you can keep up to two domestic animals without requiring permission from us.

4.4 Where permission is needed

- 4.4.1 You must get permission from us if you:
- Want more than 2 domestic animals in a home with its own entrance and private garden
 - Live in a flat or maisonette
 - Want to install dog or cat flaps
 - Want to run a pet related business from your home e.g. pet sitting, dog walking or grooming
 - Want to keep poultry or pigeons
 - Want to keep snakes/spiders or other non-domestic animals which are not classed as dangerous animals.
- 4.4.2 When considering your request, we will look at the following when making our decision:
- The terms and conditions of your Tenancy Agreement,
 - Size and type of pet
 - The suitability of your home, including

- Size and type of home
- Access to outside space
- Communal areas
- Your ability to care for the pet, including
 - Medical limitations
 - Previous proven issues relating to pet ownership
 - Other proven tenancy breaches such as noise nuisance
 - Whether it is a temporary arrangement e.g caring for an animal whilst a family member is on holiday or in hospital.

4.4.3 If permission is refused, we will explain our decision to you. If you feel we have refused your request unreasonably, you can appeal. This will be reviewed by the Housing Area Manager ; you will be notified of the decision following review.

4.4.4 Where we discover a pet is being kept without permission, this will be looked at retrospectively, and permission will not be unreasonably withheld and consideration given in line with paragraph 4.4.2 of this policy.

4.5 Restrictions

4.5.1 We will not allow you to keep:

- Dogs listed in **Section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991**, unless an exemption applies (see 4.3.2).
- Any animal listed under the **Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976**, including certain types of spiders, venomous snakes, and other species considered dangerous.
- **Non-domestic animals** such as sheep, goats, pigs, cattle, or horses.

4.5.2 If any of the above restrictions are breached, you will be required to rehome the animal. Failure to comply may result in formal tenancy action and, where necessary, notification to the relevant authorities (such as the police).

4.6 XL Bully Dogs (Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, amended 2023)

4.6.1 From 31 December 2023, the XL Bully type was added to the list of prohibited dogs under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991. It is illegal to breed, sell, advertise, abandon, or give away an XL Bully. From the 1st February 2024 It became illegal to own an XL Bully without a valid Certificate of Exemption.

4.6.2 Exempted dogs must:

- Be neutered and microchipped.
- Be kept on a lead and muzzled in public, handled by someone aged 16+. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes communal hallways and gardens.
- Be kept in secure conditions to prevent escape.
- Have valid third-party liability insurance.
- Owners must provide proof of exemption and compliance if requested.

- 4.6.3 We will only allow current residents to keep XL Bully type dogs if evidence can be presented that you are complying fully with current legislation. We will not allow any other requests to keep XL Bully type dogs.

5. Independent Living Homes

- 5.1 We recognise the many benefits that pet ownership can bring to individuals and households, which is why we aim to support as many of our customers as possible in keeping a pet, if they wish to do so.
- 5.2 However, we feel some of our Independent Living homes are not suitable for pets due to the nature of the accommodation and shared facilities. In these properties, pets are not permitted in order to protect health and safety, maintain hygiene standards, and ensure the comfort and well-being of all residents.
- 5.3 Our Independent Living homes at the following locations are not suitable for any pets to be kept unless covered within the exceptions for Assistance Animals where this is agreed:
- Birthwaite, Windermere
 - Edgecombe Court, Kendal – Not including surrounding properties with their own entrance and no shared facilities
 - West Ing, Ambleside
- 5.4 If you live in any other Independent Living home, you may require permission from us to keep pets in your home. Consideration will be given in line with the general permissions listed above.

6. Assistance Animals and Emotional Support Animals

- 6.1 Whilst a small number of our homes may be deemed as unsuitable for the keeping of pets, we recognise that animals can play an important role in supporting people's health and wellbeing. Under the Equality Act 2010, assistance dogs are legally recognised and must be permitted in our homes, even where pets are usually restricted. Emotional support animals, while not classed as assistance animals under the Act, can still provide valuable comfort. For this reason, we will consider requests to keep an emotional support animal on a case-by-case basis, while balancing the needs of all residents.
- 6.2 **Assistance dogs:**
- Assistance dogs will always be permitted in line with the Equality Act 2010.
 - No additional permission is required, but we may ask for confirmation that the dog has been trained by a recognised organisation.
 - Assistance dogs are not subject to any pet restrictions in our policies.
- 6.3 **Emotional support animals (ESAs):**

- ESAs are not legally classed as assistance animals under the Equality Act 2010.
- Residents wishing to keep an ESA must seek permission from us.
- Permission will not be unreasonably withheld; each request will be given consideration in line with section 4.4.2 of this policy.

5. Responsibilities

- 5.1 Clear roles and responsibilities help us to apply this policy fairly and consistently. Different teams within SLH have specific duties to ensure that pet ownership is managed appropriately, restrictions are upheld, and any issues are addressed promptly. The following sets out who is responsible for what in relation to the management and enforcement of this policy:
- 5.2 Area Housing Manager:
- Take formal tenancy action where residents fail to comply with the pet policy where necessary
 - Review applications where a refusal has been appealed
- 5.3 Housing Officers and Independence & Wellbeing Co-ordinators :
- Provide advice and guidance to residents on the pet policy.
 - Review requests to keep pets where permission is required.
 - Investigate reports of breaches, nuisance, or welfare concerns.
 - Issue warnings and recommend tenancy action where appropriate.
 - Liaise with relevant authorities (e.g. RSPCA, Police, Local Authority) where there are issues of dangerous, neglected, or prohibited animals.
- 5.4 Repairs & Maintenance Teams / Contractors:
- Report any concerns about pets (e.g. welfare issues, dangerous breeds, or property damage) they observe while carrying out work in resident's homes.
- 5.5 Customer Services / Frontline Staff:
- Provide initial advice on pet permissions and restrictions.
 - Record and pass on reports of pet-related issues to the appropriate team for follow-up.

5.6 Your responsibilities

- 5.6.1 We expect that all residents who keep pets do so in a responsible manner, and that pets must be cared for adequately, ensuring the welfare of the animal is maintained. Your responsibilities as a pet owner are listed below:
- Pets must always be kept under proper control. Dogs should be kept on a lead in communal areas and never allowed to roam unsupervised.
 - You are responsible for cleaning up after your pets promptly and hygienically, inside your home and public and private spaces outside your home, including applicable communal areas.

- You must not cause or allow your pet to cause a nuisance to your neighbours. If this is persistent, we may investigate this as Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) under our ASB policy.
- XL Bully type dogs must be muzzled and kept on a short lead or in a crate when we visit your home.
- You are responsible for the behaviour of pets that are brought to your home by visitors.

5.6.2 We may ask you to keep your pet in a separate room when we visit your home, e.g. operatives attending to carry out a repair.

5.6.3 If you breach any of your responsibilities set out above, we will engage with you to resolve the issue. If we cannot resolve the issue or if you do not engage with us, we may remove permission for you to keep a pet.

5.6.4 Where permission is withdrawn, we will notify you in writing with the reasons for our decision, and we will agree a reasonable timeframe with you to rehome your pet(s). Where this is not adhered to, we may take legal action against your tenancy, e.g. injunction.

6. Monitoring & Review

6.1 The policy will be reviewed every 3 years or in line with any changes in legislation or guidance, which may necessitate a review of our approach.

6.2 The Housing Services Manager will be responsible for ensuring the consistent implementation of this Policy, along with all relevant reviews taking place.