



## Pet Policy 2020 RBK Housing

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## **Scope**

This policy applies to secure and introductory tenants living in a Kingston Council property. This policy also applies to Shared Ownership, Shared Equity and Leaseholders and to lets of temporary or private accommodation.

More information regarding the keeping of pets can be found in your tenancy agreement. This policy does not apply if an RBK estate regeneration scheme has defined separate rules for the keeping of pets.

## **Permission for keeping Pets**

Secure and introductory tenants in general needs properties

If you are a secure or introductory tenant, you and your household will be able to keep small caged birds, fish in tanks or small caged rodents without requesting permission. Exotic or wild animals are not permitted to be kept. You and your household may not keep any other animal(s) except with the Council's prior written permission.

Consent for a single cat will usually be granted.

Sheltered Accommodation

If you are living in sheltered accommodation and would like to keep any pets, you must first get our written permission. We will look at each case on its own merits, please note that you will only be given permission if you live in a suitable property but permission will not be unreasonably withheld for small caged birds, fish in tanks or small caged rodents. You must not keep dogs, cats or other large animals in sheltered accommodation.

Leaseholders

If you are a leaseholder and would like to keep any pets, you must first get our written permission. We will look at each case on its own merits, please note that you will only be given permission if you live in a suitable property but permission will not be unreasonably withheld for small caged birds, fish in tanks or small caged rodents and a single cat.

Temporary Accommodation

Temporary Accommodation provided through the Council to homeless households may provide a home suitable for a pet. However, where the accommodation offers shared access, communal facilities or the absence of a self enclosed garden there remains the possibility that the accommodation provider might reasonably withhold the right to keep a pet in consideration of other residents sharing the property and the suitability of the property. In these circumstances the Council will seek alternative accommodation. Where none is readily available to ensure a households homelessness is prevented the Council will source alternative pet homing arrangements.

Emergency Accommodation

For households approaching our service as homeless requiring accommodation on an emergency basis we will ask the accommodation providers if they will permit pets in

their property. If accommodation cannot be found that will permit pets the Council will enquire with the household about alternative homing arrangements and if not available offer to assist arranging kennelling or fostering.

The Council will always seek to source and provide accommodation that can accommodate a pet to meet the needs of any member of a household in respect of a defined medical, social or disability requirement.

#### All tenures

The pet should not cause excessive or persistent noise or smell.

If the pet becomes a nuisance in any way (noise/smell/fouling/control etc.) or if we suspect the pet is neglected, consent for the pet will be withdrawn and the tenant/leaseholder will be required to permanently remove the pet from the property. If RBK receives a report that a pet is neglected RBK will seek assistance from the RSPCA who will provide an independent view of a pet's welfare and are also able to take their own independent action.

A dog will only be allowed if you live on the ground floor, and have direct access (not via a shared pathway) to a private garden fenced in on all sides to at least 1m in height and if you agree to keep to the rules listed below. More than one dog may be considered on a case by case basis.

Special consideration will be given to visually impaired residents who may not have access to a private garden or live above the ground floor and need to keep a guide dog, and for residents who need a hearing dog. We will also give consideration to keeping registered assistance dogs where other medical reasons are provided.

Permission will not be granted for any animals listed under the Dangerous Wild Animal Act 1976 or for any dog listed under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991. Any animals kept must follow all legal requirements including but not limited to Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015 and Control of Dogs Order 1992

If we have granted permission for you to house a pet and your pet dies you will need permission from RBK before housing another pet.

In exceptional circumstances, RBK may consider variations to this policy. The variation will depend upon the individual situation, any extenuating circumstances and the evidence available. Each case will be considered on individual merit. RBK's decision and reasons for the decision will be provided in writing to the relevant parties.

#### **Enforcement action**

Where a tenant has never sought permission to keep a pet excluding the exceptions detailed above, this is a breach of the Tenancy Conditions. Where RBK is aware that a tenant is keeping pets without permission the pet owner will be contacted and given 14 days to apply for permission. If this is not done or permission is applied for and refused and the tenant remains in breach of the tenancy RBK will contact the tenant in writing

and advise the time frame for rehoming the pet. After this if the tenant remains in breach of the tenancy RBK may apply for an injunction and/or a possession order.

### **Recording information about pets**

Where permission to keep a pet is granted, the council will take details of all the pets the tenant wants to keep, including their breed and age. The council will also take details of the vet and an emergency contact.

The council will need to know if pets are being kept in the property and emergency contact details in case there is an emergency, such as a flood or a fire or the tenant has to go to hospital. Holding these details will also ensure the council is aware of any animals being kept in the property in the event of any eviction procedures being taken. Details should be held on file and updated with any changes.

If the resident has to go into hospital or dies and no emergency contact is available RBK will seek assistance from the RSPCA who are able to take their own independent action to safeguard the welfare of the pet. Costs for this may be passed on to the resident or the estate of the deceased.

RBK staff are not able to provide any pet feeding or other pet services.

### **If your pet causes damage to the property**

Any damage caused by your pets to the property will need to be put right. Please see our rechargeable repairs policy.

### **If your pet causes a nuisance**

If it comes to our attention that an animal is causing a nuisance we will inform you of these problems and advise you that permission will be removed. If permission is removed, you will be notified in writing and given a timeframe in which you should rehome the pet. If you fail to rehome the pet after notification then RBK may take legal action. This may be in the form of an injunction or may be possession action.

Residents may not undertake the following activities from their RBK property:

- Breeding of animals.
- Sale of animals.
- Hoarding of animals – this is the term used for people who keep an excessive number of animals without the ability to properly house or care for them.

### **Dogs**

In addition to the conditions stated above, there are further rules relating to the keeping of dogs, specifically:

- A dog must remain secure within the property and must be accompanied and on a lead in internal and external communal areas, and accompanied when in

a tenant/leaseholders private garden. The dog lead should be no longer than 6ft (2 metres.)

- A dog is under control at all times and is not a potential threat to other residents or the public.
- You must clean up after your dog if it fouls your garden or shared areas of the estate.
- You must keep the dog on a lead in communal areas, with a name tag and not allow it out without a responsible adult.
- You must keep to the council's dog bye-laws.

The dog must:

- Have identification in public areas bearing the owner's name, address and/or telephone number. Please note that this is a legal requirement. Failure to comply could result in a heavy fine.
- Puppies must be microchipped before they go to their new homes under the new law which came into force on 6 April 2016.
- Be kept under control at all times and not cause a nuisance or a danger to anyone. They must be kept on a lead when outside in shared areas of the council's estates.
- Where your dog has fouled your home, garden or any communal areas to adequately clean this up. Dog faeces can carry diseases which can be harmful to people. It is an offence for a dog owner not to clean up after their dog in public places such as roads, estates, footpaths and parks. Failure to clean up can result in a on the spot fine or prosecution and a fine.
- Not cause any other nuisance to other people such as excessive barking or making excessive noise.

If you do have a pet, you are responsible by law for the pet's welfare, as defined by the Animal Welfare Act 2006. It is an offence for anyone responsible for a pet not to look after it properly. You must ensure that your pet has a suitable environment to live in, a suitable diet, and is safe from harm and abide by the Animal Welfare Act 2006  
<https://www.rspca.org.uk/whatwedo/endcruelty/changingthelaw/whatwechanged/animalwelfareact>

### **Concerned about cruelty or dangerous dogs?**

If you have a complaint about a dangerous dog or a banned dog please contact the police on 101 In an emergency always dial 999.

If you wish to report any welfare concerns about pets you can call the RSPCA 24 hour National Cruelty and Advice line on 0300 1234 999.

### **Apply for permission to keep a pet**

[Form - Apply to keep a pet](#)