

BELGRAVE NEIGHBOURHOOD CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING ASSOCIATION

PETS POLICY

Aims of the pets policy

The following are aims of the pets policy:

- To ensure that responsible pet ownership is allowed
- To ensure that certain types of pet are prohibited
- To ensure that pet owners take responsibility for their pets

Delegated Authority

- 1 The co-op delegates authority to its Senior Housing Lead to implement the Pets Policy.

Policy statement

- 2 Responsible pet ownership can be a great source of companionship and bring other benefits, but controls are needed to prevent irresponsible pet ownership which can cause suffering to animals and a nuisance to neighbours.
- 3 Various legislation listed below affects pet ownership in relation to protection of the members of the public, of the pets themselves, and of the environment.
- 4 The co-op sets out the following rules regarding keeping pets:
 - members are required to get permission to keep pets
 - assistance dogs or animals are allowed where there is evidence that they are needed
 - consent may be withdrawn to keep pets if a nuisance is caused or if the number of animals needs to be restricted
 - dogs should be microchipped and kept on a lead in co-op communal areas
 - any animal fouling on co-op property should be cleared up immediately by the owner
 - members must ensure animals kept in the home are subject to proper control and do not cause damage, nuisance or annoyance to any other person

- pets must not damage co-op property. Members may be charged for any damage caused to co-op property.
 - members are not allowed to run animal related businesses from their home such as breeding animals for sale or kennels.
- 5 Permission will normally be given for small domestic animals and birds, subject to suitability of the property. Permission will not be granted for a dog that is not microchipped. Permission will not be granted for farm animals, pigeons, animals registered under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976, or dogs specified in the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991. Permission may not be granted where there is an ongoing or past pet ownership problem in the household. Permission can be granted subject to the pet receiving vaccinations and treatments such as de-fleaing and worming to reduce the risk of diseases and parasites spreading.
- 6 The co-op will take appropriate action where pet behaviour causes nuisance to neighbours, such as stray animals, pet fouling in communal areas or neighbours gardens, excessive noise, excessive numbers of pets, unpleasant odours and aggressive animals. Resolution may be informal, but where this is not possible, permission for the pet may be withdrawn or pet numbers may be restricted; actions in the co-op's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy may be taken, such as using an Acceptable Behaviour Contract or mediation, or serving injunctions; the Police or the Local Authority may be involved (and may be requested to serve a Community Protection Notice); the RSPCA may be involved. Instances of cruelty or neglect will be reported to the RSPCA.
- 7 The co-op will keep records of pet agreements and will check on numbers and types of pets when carrying out tenancy visits.

Potential risks to be avoided

- Pets owned by co-op members may be dangerous to others and/or cause nuisance
- Pets may be improperly looked after resulting in concerns about the welfare of the pets
- Pets may damage the co-op's property

Relevant legislation

The following legislation is relevant to pet ownership:

- **Animal Welfare Act 2006** – this places a duty of care on pet owners to provide for their animal's basic needs such as adequate food and water, veterinary treatment and a suitable living environment. The Act imposes penalties on those who inflict serious cruelty on animals and includes a new offence that means animals do not have to suffer for owners to be prosecuted under this Act.
- **Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976** – the co-op will not give permission to keep any pet registered under this Act, this includes certain types of venomous spider and snake.
- **Control of Dogs Order 1992** – this requires every dog in public to wear a collar bearing the name and address of its owner inscribed on it – it is not sufficient for the dog to be microchipped or tattooed. The owner or responsible person may be prosecuted and fined if the dog is not wearing a collar when out in public.
- **Dangerous Dogs Act 1991** (as amended by Section 106 of the **Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014**) – the co-op will not give permission to keep any dog specified in this Act. Dog owners should also note that section 3 of this Act applies to all dogs and makes it a criminal offence to allow a dog to be dangerously out of control in a public or a private place (including a tenant's home, front or back garden) and this includes where a person has reasonable grounds to be frightened that an injury might occur. Tenants need to make sure that any visitor can safely access their front door without encountering their dog. They also need to consider how their dog greets people. What may be viewed as a dog being friendly by jumping up at visitors may be seen as threatening behaviour by a stranger.
- **The Microchipping of Dogs (Regulations) 2014** – makes it obligatory for dog owners to have their dogs chipped. Dogs must be chipped and registered to an approved database by the time they are 8 weeks old. The government advises that the dog be healthy enough to be implanted (only a qualified vet can state that a dog is not healthy enough) and sufficient

time is allowed for the database to process the registration in order to ensure that the dog is compliant with the regulations by the time they are 8 weeks old. The Dogs Trust may provide a free microchipping service, in some cases working with the local authority.

- **Environmental Protection Act 1990** – Section 70 states that it is an offence to keep any animal in a place or manner that is prejudicial to health, causes a nuisance or emits noise from a building that causes a nuisance. Examples of such behaviour include excessive barking, a large number of dogs running loose or keeping an excessive number of cats.