

Pets Policy

Islington & Shoreditch Housing Association

1. Policy Statement

This policy outlines Islington & Shoreditch Housing Association's (ISHA) approach to Pets within its housing stock.

This policy is based on the document 'Guidelines on Pet Management for Social Housing Providers' published by the Pet Advisory Committee and endorsed by the British Veterinary Association, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and the Chartered Institute of Housing.

ISHA recognises that keeping pets can offer significant benefits to their owners. However, irresponsible ownership can cause nuisance and affect the quality of life for other residents in an area. It is also recognised that some buildings may not be suitable for pets such as cats and dogs and in some circumstances may be designated 'pet free'.

Pets are not permitted in Supported Housing properties managed by the Supported Housing Team. This includes those managed by agents on ISHA's behalf.

This policy does not apply to small animals that are housed in cages or bowls/tanks in properties and do not need to be allowed out of the property. ie. small birds (canaries & budgies) and small fish (goldfish). It does apply to larger animals eg cats, dogs, rabbits and larger birds eg parrots and to animals that could be classed as 'exotic' (snakes, caged spiders etc) or vermin (hamsters, mice, rats etc).

All tenancy agreements issued by ISHA state that the Association's consent or permission is required to keep a pet (see below). Tenants who keep pets without consent may have enforcement action, including eviction, taken against them. Permission will only be considered where a written request to keep a pet has been received by the Resident Services Manager. If permission is granted a pet application form (**appendix 4**) must be completed.

A written request must be sent to the Resident Services Manager for a new pet and if permission is granted a pet application form must be completed. This applies to both to new pets and replacement pets (those that have been rehoused or which have died).

All pets must be permanently identified by microchip or tattoo and the identification details must be registered with ISHA. To comply with current legislation dogs must also wear a collar and tag. Cats should be neutered.

Dogs listed in the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 and any animals listed in the Schedule of the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 may not be kept. This is to protect the health and safety of any residents and employees of ISHA who may come into contact with them.

Where permission is granted tenants are responsible for the health and welfare of their pets. Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, this is called a duty of care. This requires proper day to day management and care of the pet. If tenants have any questions about the care of their pets they should contact their vet or a suitable accredited animal welfare organisation. Routine healthcare must include regular control of parasites (fleas and worms), vaccinations and neutering where appropriate. When applying to keep a pet you may be asked to provide the name of your vet and evidence from them that your pet is regularly treated.

Under no circumstances will permission be given to breed or offer any animal for sale from an ISHA property.

The control of pets and any pet visiting the property is the responsibility of the tenant. If cats are allowed free access outside then steps must be taken to ensure they do not cause nuisance to neighbours. Dogs must always be kept on a lead when in public areas. They must never be let out on their own – this includes communal balconies and stairwells. Dog faeces must always be removed immediately.

If outside accommodation for a pet is required, other than a hutch or pen for small mammals, written permission must be obtained before it is built. An application must include plans of the proposed construction and detail the species to be kept.

No pet should be left in the property when the tenant is away unless clear arrangements have been made to provide adequate care. In general this will require the pet to be boarded elsewhere but close supervision by a neighbour may be adequate for some animals.

ISHA will deal with requests to keep pets as fairly as possible bearing in mind any problems or restrictions which may exist on any estate or in any block.

2. Related Procedures and other Documents

The following documents are relevant to this policy:

- ISHA's Anti Social Behaviour Procedure and
- ISHA's Tenancy & Lease Agreements:

The Assured Tenancy Agreement states "To obtain the written consent of the Association before keeping a dog or any animal in the premises. Where consent has been given and in the opinion of the Association the dog or animal subsequently causes a nuisance consent will be withdrawn and the Tenant must immediately remove the animal concerned."

For our Shared Ownership Schemes the Lease Agreement states

“Not to keep any bird, reptile, dog, cat, or any other animal (except small caged bird or fish in an aquarium) in the premises without the written permission of the Landlord. Permission may be withdrawn if the Landlord believes the animal may be causing a nuisance to owners, lessees, or other occupiers of neighbouring premises.”

The Secure Tenancy Agreement states “The Tenant shall obtain the written consent of the Association before keeping a dog or other animal in the Premises which might cause a nuisance to neighbours.”

The Assured Shorthold Agreement states that “ Not to keep or permit to be kept on the property any pets or animals of any description without the previous consent in writing of the Landlord which consent the Landlord may at any time withdraw if any animal (so permitted) shall soil or damage any carpet, rug, fabric or other item with a new one of good quality.

All prospective new tenants to the Association will be given a leaflet explaining ISHA’s policy concerning pets when they view a property that they may wish to move to. This gives them the opportunity not to accept the property if they want to keep a pet and it is unlikely that they will be given permission to do so.

Where appropriate, when requesting nominations for an empty property, the Allocations Officer will notify the Local Authority when permission will not be given to keep a pet in a property. This will be checked at sign up (using the sign up checklist).

3. Procedure and Enforcement

All requests to keep a pet must be made in writing before a pet is acquired to the Resident Services Manager.

3.1 When a written request to keep a pet is received from a resident, ISHA has four options which can be applied. These are as follows:

3.11 ISHA’s tenancy agreement clearly states that pets are not allowed without consent. This is generally seen as a “No Pets Policy” and is applied in flats where properties do not have a private garden and where pets can be a nuisance. Residents must be informed of this when offers are made.

3.12 ISHA discourages pet ownership however applicants coming to the Association with a pet may be given permission to keep their current pet in accordance with the Policy above. This however will not be granted for additional or future pets.

3.13 In ISHA’s street properties with a suitable exclusive garden, pets may be allowed with consent as long as they do not cause a

nuisance. Where there is a nuisance, appropriate enforcement measures will be taken, including possession proceedings, where necessary.

3.14 Pets are not permitted in Supported Housing properties which are managed by the Supported Housing Team. This includes those managed by agents on ISHA's behalf. The Rough Sleeper Initiative properties will for the purposes of this policy and procedure be treated in the same way as the rest of ISHA's general needs stock. Residents must be informed of this when offers are made.

Once a decision has been made, ISHA will write to the resident within 10 working days to let them know whether permission to keep a pet has been granted or not.

Where permission to keep a dog is given the Guidance Notes for Dog Owners should be sent with the letter (**appendix one**).

3.2 How ISHA decides which option to use

Due to the design and/or high density of ISHA's new estates they are not suitable for pets such as cats and dogs. These estates will be Pet Free and permission will not be granted. The only exception will be assistance dogs and on where pets are required for medical reasons. (**See appendix three**)

For existing estates ISHA will not unreasonably refuse consent to keep dogs, cats and other common domestic pets. Each request will be considered on an individual basis before making a decision.

For street properties or properties with exclusive use of a garden ISHA will not unreasonably refuse consent.

On receipt of a written request to keep a pet, the Resident Services Manager is responsible for deciding whether or not permission will be granted.

3.3 Applying the Policy

Where a property is considered suitable for keeping a pet, residents will be allowed a maximum of one pet per household (with the exception of caged birds and goldfish/tropical fish). Permission must be sought from ISHA prior to the pet's arrival and will be conditional on the pet not causing a nuisance etc. The pet's behaviour is the responsibility of the owner/s and if it persistently causes a nuisance ISHA may ask for it to be re-housed. Possession proceedings will be started where residents do not comply with the conditions associated with consent.

ISHA will give permission to keep a pet where it is required for medical reasons. This request must be supported by a recommendation from a doctor or a medical consultant.

ISHA will normally give permission to keep a guide or support dog in a flat or other property that would otherwise be unsuitable. Although it is extremely unlikely that permission would not be granted it is still required and does not set a precedent for other tenants wanting to keep a dog.

3.4 Considerations

3.41 Granting Permission to keep a pet

Before granting permission it is important to remember that a precedent is being set and that it will be difficult to refuse similar requests from neighbours. A few pets on an estate may not make a difference, but large numbers may. Changing the situation can be very difficult however this should not prevent us from unnecessarily withholding consent, as there should be no reduction in the quality of life on an estate if owners look after their pets responsibly.

For street properties, ISHA will not unnecessarily withhold consent but this will be based on having sole access to a garden. Where a garden is shared with other residents, permission will not be granted because the presence of an animal may make an empty property more difficult to let in the future.

Consent will depend on the type of pet the resident(s) wish to have. In general all pets must not cause a noise nuisance or a nuisance to neighbours. They must be properly looked after and not mistreated. Other criteria will be taken into account for specific pets as follows:

3.42 Dogs

- The dog is not from a dangerous dog breed as defined by the Dangerous Dog Act 1991.
- The property has a separate entrance and sole use of a garden.
- Does the household already have pets and if yes, how many?
- Dogs must not be allowed to 'wander' unattended.
- Dogs must be kept on a lead at all times in the communal areas.
- Owners must clean up after the pets especially if they foul in the communal areas including communal balconies and stairways, grassed areas, footpaths verges, and adjoining roads within the estate.
- Dogs must not be left in the house unattended for more than 24 hours.
- Ensure pets are held on a lead at all times when ISHA staff/contractors visit.

3.43 Cats

- Is there a private garden or access to an outside space?
- Does the household already have pets and if yes, how many?

3.44 Other animals and exotic species

- Is a license required to keep this pet?
- Is there a potential for noise nuisance?
- What effects are there to neighbours if the pet escapes?
- Is the property suitable?

When these conditions are not met and the pet is already on site the resident will be asked to re-house their pet within the next 14 days.

3.5 Withdrawing Permission.

Permission to keep a pet will be withdrawn if it causes nuisance.

Dangerous or nuisance activities include:

- Excessive barking.
- Dogs roaming without a lead.
- Cat or dog owners not removing their animal's toilet droppings to a bin or allowing the animal to use grassed areas as a toilet and failing to clear up the mess.
- A dog owner failing to report if their animal is registered under Dangerous Dog Act.
- Keeping animals over the maximum number permitted.
- The keeping of other animals such as snakes, rats, mice, rabbits or insects with inadequate facilities
- Reports that dogs are used to intimidate people.

3.6 Obtaining Evidence for withdrawing permission.

3.61 If a member of staff, resident, contractor or visitor is bitten by a dog, when visiting an ISHA property, they should obtain qualified medical treatment (usually through an A&E department). Notes they make about injuries could be useful, as can photographs if taken at the time. The police will normally deal with incidents where a person has been bitten, whereas the local authority should deal with incidents where there is no actual injury but the dog's behaviour gives fear of injury.

3.62 Information required will include:

- The date and time of the incident
- Where and how the incident occurred
- A description of the dog(s) involved
- The name and address of the dog owner or the person with the dog(s) at the time of the incident
- Name and address of any witness to the incident

3.63 If an owner does permit their dog to threaten or cause injury to the public, they can be held responsible and can be fined or ordered by

the court to control their dog(s). In some serious cases a court may order the destruction of the dog.

3.64 As mentioned above, it will depend on the circumstances whether incidents are dealt with by the local authority or the police. In some circumstances however, where there is no injury to a person and the main issue is damage to property such as a car or another animal. The local authority and the police may not become involved at all. Such incidents may be best dealt with as a civil matter between the parties involved. This may require taking legal advice with a view to a small claims court judgement.

3.7 Pets Kept Without Permission

When ISHA discovers that a resident is keeping a pet without consent a letter together with a copy of this policy and procedure will be sent giving the resident 14 days to either remove the pet or complete and submit a pet application form retrospectively. **(Appendix 6)**

3.71 Where residents are keeping pets without permission, consideration should be given to whether ISHA would have given permission. If yes, then provided the conditions for keeping a pet are accepted retrospective permission can be given.

3.72 If permission was previously refused or where permission would be refused the Resident Services Manager should visit the tenant and explain why the pet should be removed. This should be confirmed in writing and a timescale set for the pet's removal of 14 days.

3.73 If the animal is not removed, the case should be discussed with the Head of Housing or in his absence the Operations Director. If necessary, legal advice should be obtained. The normal course of action would be for notice to be served and an application made for possession. ISHA will agree to suspend possession if the resident agrees to remove the pet. ISHA will need to demonstrate that it has acted in a consistent way and that there are genuine reasons for requesting the removal.

4. Notes for Residents about Dogs (appendix two)

When a resident calls expressing concern about a dog which may or may not belong to an ISHA resident this leaflet may be sent to them to try to allay their fears.

5. Stray Pets

Stray animals should be reported to the Council or the RSPCA. ISHA will seek their removal from the area or estate. It is expected that someone from the vicinity will report the stray animal however where no one appears to be taking responsibility the Estates Officer should ensure the well being of the homeless animal.

6. Abandoned Animals

Where animals may be abandoned in a property, the RSPCA should be contacted.

7. Pet Sitting

Tenants who are asked to 'pet sit' for a period will only be allowed to do so with prior permission from the Association. Permission will be given for a limited period of up to 28 days unless there are exceptional grounds for refusal which are agreed by the Head of Housing. Grounds for refusal will include the pet being far too large for the property occupied by the tenant.

8. Responsibility

The Operations Director is responsible for monitoring the policy. The Head of Housing is responsible for managing the policy.

9 Policy Review Date:

This policy will be reviewed in three years (Jan 2016) or if there is a change in legislation prior to next review date.

May 2010

Appendix One

Guidance Notes for Dog Owners

To be given out when permission to keep a dog is granted

Your responsibilities are to ensure:

- Your dog does not stray
- Your dog wears a collar and clearly displayed tag. The tag must bear the name and address of the dog's owner. This is a legal requirement (Control of Dogs Order 1992) Your dog should also be microchipped or tattooed
- Your dog is kept on a lead at all times in communal areas
- Your dog is not permitted to cause a statutory noise nuisance
- Your dog is not permitted to be a danger to others and is kept under control
- You remove dog faeces from any communal area. If however dog fouling does occur away from home the responsible owner will clean up after their dog. Any suitable plastic bag can be used, or special poop-scoop bags can be obtained from pet shops, veterinary surgeries and many supermarkets. Dogs should not be taken for a walk with the intention of letting them foul a public place.
- It is a good idea to ensure your dogs have received all the necessary inoculations. First vaccinations are given at about eight weeks. Puppies should not be allowed on the street or mix with other animals until your vet advises. Always keep your dog's vaccination certificates. You may need them in the future. Regular booster vaccinations are necessary, at

least once a year.

- It is important to keep your dog clean by grooming at least once a week and bathing as appropriate for the breed. Start at puppy stage so it becomes a pleasure not a chore.
- FLEAS if your dog gets fleas treat it with a reliable spray, dusting power, or wash. Also clean the areas your dog uses and sleeps in.
- NEUTERING unless you are sure you want your bitch to have puppies and you can find good homes for them, you should have her spayed. Your vet will also be able to give you details on hormonal control of seasons. Castration is an option for dogs. As a responsible pet owner you should ask your vet about whether your dog should be neutered.

What is a Dangerous Dog?

The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 designates certain breeds of dogs as required special controls. These designated breeds are Pit bull Terriers, Japanese Tosa, Dogo Argentino and Fila Brazilieros. Any restrictions placed on the dog under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 must be reported to ISHA by the dog owners.

Owners of these dogs should have them registered and they are not allowed to breed them, sell them or exchange them, or give them away and must keep them muzzled and on lead at all times in a public place.

However, the 'breed' of dog is not the best way to measure danger.

Any dog can be dangerous and it is an offence under the dangerous Dogs Act 1991 to allow any dog to be "dangerously out of control" or to give reasonable fear that injury could be caused to anyone, in any place.

This leaflet is not comprehensive, and cannot cover all aspect of a dog owner's responsibility. If you would like more advice about the law and its implication with regards to dangerous dogs, please contact the RSPCA on: 0300 1234 555 or 0300 1234 999.

Appendix Two

Notes for Residents about Dogs

Dog Bites

If a dog bites you, causing you injury, you should report the incident to the police and seek expert medical advice immediately.

If you are not bitten, but fear a dog could cause injury to yourself or others, you should report the incident to the Council. Also, all unattended (stray dogs) should be reported to the Council to prevent potential incidents.

Safety Advice

DON'T

- Approach a dog without the owner's permission
- Leave small children alone with dogs or give any child sole responsibility for the supervision of a dog.
- Tease dogs in any way
- Run, scream or shout around dogs
- Ignore reasonable written or verbal instruction from a dog owner

DO

- Get to know a dog only when the owner is present
- Stay calm and quiet around dogs
- Move slowly around dogs
- Put an object or solid barrier between yourself and any dog attacking you. (Dogs will usually bite the first thing they reach)

- Get inside a building or car as soon as possible (lock the dog out or lock the dog inside!) if you are under attack

What can you do about a dog fouling offence?

If you witness dog fouling in the communal area, public place or are experiencing problems with dog(s) fouling you can report it to your local Council and/or your Tenancy Services Manager at ISHA. Reports will be investigated either individually by ISHA or as part of routine dog fouling patrols by the Council.

Disability Assistance Dogs

What is a Disability Assistance Dog?

These are dogs trained to assist and support their disabled owners with their specific disability. Most types of dog can be trained to aid their owners.



What is different about a Disability Assistance Dog?

Utilising the special bond that exists between a pet dog and owner, Support Dogs channel their willingness to help into true assistance work. Each dog is taught task work tailored to the owner's needs, enabling that person to lead a more full and independent life.

As a registered Assistance Dog, a Disability Assistance Dog is able to accompany his or her owner at all times.

Pet Application Form

Name:	
Address:	
Postcode:	
Type of property:	House Flat Maisonette Bungalow (please circle)
Flats – Floor:	First Second Third Fourth or higher (please circle)
Garden:	Shared or Exclusive (please circle)
Telephone:	Landline: Mobile:

Please circle:

Dog Cat Small mammal Reptile Bird Fish Other

Name: _____ **Sex:** male female neutered (please circle)

Breed: **Age:**

Colour: _____ **Approximate body weight (kgs):** _____

Microchip number: _____ **Is a Licence required?** yes / no
(please circle)

Name and address of vet:

I have read ISHA's guidelines and confirm that my pet complies with them.

I undertake to comply with all policies relating to pets and will ensure that all persons living with me and my visitors also do so.

I understand that having a pet is a privilege and not a right and that if I infringe the rules it may affect my tenancy or I may be asked to remove it.

Signed

.....

Date.....

Please note it is the responsibility of all animal owners to remove animal waste from all communal areas, including gardens, balconies and pathways.

***Delete if not applicable.**

Contact Details of Council Dog/Animal Services

For information concerning dog and other animal services in the Borough please click on the relevant link given below:

Hackney Council: - <http://www.hackney.gov.uk/ey-animal-welfare-434.htm>

Islington Council: -
http://www.islington.gov.uk/Environment/animal_welfare/default.asp

Camden Council: -
<http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/content/environment/environmental-health--consumer-protection/animal-welfare/dog-barking.en>

Waltham Forest Council: -
<http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/index/environment/environmental-health/animal-welfare/fouling/dangerous-and-stray-dogs/stray-dogs.htm>

Other useful contacts:

Association of Dogs & Cats Homes
Email: secretary@adch.org.uk

PDSA
01952 290999
0800 9172502

Battersea Dogs & Cats Home
0207 622 3626
Email: info@battersea.org.uk

RSPCA
0300 1234555

Blue Cross
Email: info@bluecross.org.uk

Wood Green Animal Shelters
0844 2488181
Email: info@woodgreen.org.uk

British Small Animal Veterinary Assn
01452 726700
Email: administration@bsava.com

Association of Pet Dog Trainers
01285 810811
APDToffice@aol.com

Cats Protection
08702 708649
Email: helpline@cats.org.uk

Pet Bereavement Support Services
0800 0966606
Email:

pbssmail@bluecross.org.uk
Dogs Trust
0207 837 0006
Email: info@dogstrust.org.uk

Rabbit Welfare Assn. & Fund
0870 0465249

National Animal Welfare Trust
0208 950 0177
Email: reception@nawt.org.uk

Fed. of British Herpetologists
(reptiles & amphibians)
Email: enquiries@f-b-h.co.uk

Pets As Therapy
01844 345445 Email: reception@petsastherapy.org

Appendix 6

Date

Name of tenant

Address

Address

Address

Postcode

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms Xxxxx

Re Pets

It has been brought to my attention that you may be keeping a (type of animal) at the above property. Your tenancy agreement states that you must get permission to keep any pet on the premises. I do not appear to have received a written request to keep a pet from you, and there is no record of consent being given for you to keep an animal on the premises from ISHA.

I enclose a copy of ISHA's Pets Policy and Procedure for your information. If you wish to keep a pet on the premises I must receive your written request within **16 days from the date of this letter**. If your request is accepted you will be sent a Pet Application Form to complete.

If you are currently 'pet sitting' please refer to that section of the enclosed document and contact me on receipt of this letter.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Xxxxx Xxxxxx

Resident Services Manager

xxxxx@isha.co.uk