

PETS GUIDANCE

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This guidance outlines Islington & Shoreditch Housing Association’s (ISHA) approach to pet ownership within our properties.
- 1.2 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’.
- 1.3 This guidance covers all tenants, leaseholders, market rent, intermediate rent and shared owners that live in ISHA properties. ISHA residents should also check their individual tenancy and lease agreements for rules on pets.
- 1.4 This guidance 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.

2. AIMS

2.1 The aims of this guidance are:

- To ensure that pets are kept in line with the terms of the individual tenancy or lease agreement.
- To promote responsible pet ownership across ISHA communities.
- To ensure complaints about nuisance are dealt with efficiently and effectively.
- To ensure all ISHA residents are treated in a fair and unbiased manner.

Reference	Version	Created	Author	Review	Board Approved
Pets Guidance	1	September 2019		September 2022	

3. KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Assistance Dogs

3.1 Assistance Dogs such as guide dogs for the blind, hearing dogs for the hearing impaired or dogs for disabled must always be permitted. The Equality Act 2010 prohibits anyone renting or selling a property from discriminating against a person with a disability, this includes discriminating against a person with an assistance dog. An assistance dog is classified as one trained to perform specific tasks to help a person with a disability.

Nuisance

3.2 The legal definition of nuisance is “a civil wrong; it is the unreasonable, unwarranted, or unlawful use of one's property in a manner that substantially interferes with the enjoyment or use of another individual's property, without an actual Trespass or physical invasion to the land.

3.3 Dangerous or nuisance activities include, but are not limited to:

- Fouling staircases, walkways or communal areas. We expect owners to clear up their mess immediately;
- Excessive noise of pets – the volume, duration and time of day will be considered;
- Dog biting and/or attacks on people or other animals;
- Injuring or frightening anyone into thinking they might be injured;
- Pets being out of control or a danger to other residents;
- Failing to keep a dog on lead in all communal areas.

The list gives an indication of unacceptable issues however it is not limited and ISHA will decide if other activities are a nuisance or dangerous on a case by case basis.

4. STATUTORY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- The Equality Act 2010
- Dangerous Dogs Act 1991
- Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
- Animal Welfare Act 2006
- Environmental Protection Act 1990

Reference	Version	Created	Author	Review	Board Approved
Pets Guidance	1	September 2019		September 2022	

5. DETAILS

Permitted Pets

- 5.1 Customers who wish to keep a pet must first have received written permission from ISHA. Customers wishing to bring a pet with them when they move in, must request permission from ISHA before they move in.
- 5.2 Permission to keep a dog will be granted depending on whether the property has a private garden and its own separate entrance; whether the customer is considered suitable based on tenancy history; and any other factor deemed necessary for the wellbeing of the animal. Only in exceptional circumstances will permission for more than one dog be granted.
- 5.3 Permission to keep cats will usually be limited to two cats per household. This will be granted only if the cat(s) remain in the owner's premises at all times, unless there is access to a private garden, or the house/flat/maisonette has its own separate entrance
- 5.4 For Market Rent customers that have been given permission to keep cat(s) and /or dog(s), they must sign an additional agreement stating that they will have any carpets professionally cleaned upon termination of the tenancy
- 5.5 Pets are not permitted in Supported Housing properties managed by the Supported Housing Team where there are communal and shared facilities such as common rooms/kitchens, laundry rooms etc.
- 5.6 Livestock; Bees, dogs listed under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991; animals listed in the schedule of the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976; or any endangered species are not permitted under any circumstances.

Reference	Version	Created	Author	Review	Board Approved
Pets Guidance	1	September 2019		September 2022	

Exceptions

- 5.7 Customers may request permission to keep pets for wellbeing reasons, including therapy dogs, where they do not meet the above criteria. This must be supported by written evidence from a qualified professional of the benefits that the animal has for the customer's wellbeing. Where ISHA grants permission, this may be withdrawn at any time if the pet causes a nuisance or the owner is unable to care for it adequately.
- 5.8 We will permit a customer who has transferred to ISHA as part of a stock transfer to keep a dog they had prior to transfer until it dies. If the customer lives on a stock transfer estate written permission from ISHA must also be given. ISHA will not unreasonably withhold permission provided they meet the above criteria.
- 5.9 Where a customer is transferred to another property as part of a decant, they may keep permitted pets they had prior to transfer until the pet dies. For any additional pets the resident wishes to keep they must obtain written permission from ISHA.
- 5.10 When arranging a mutual exchange, it is the customer's responsibility to find a property suitable for the dog they have previously been permitted to keep. ISHA has the right to withhold permission to keep a dog if the customer moves into a property that does not fulfil the above criteria.

Applying for permission to keep pets

- 5.11 Permission will only be considered where a written request to keep a pet has been received by the Housing Expert. ISHA will provide decisions in writing within 10 working days.
- 5.12 If permission is granted a Pet Application form (appendix 4) must be completed.
- 5.13 All dogs 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.

Withdrawing permission

- 5.14 ISHA has the right to withdraw permission to keep a pet, at our discretion, particularly if the pet causes nuisance or endangers others. In these circumstances the customer will be asked to rehome the pet and failure to do so may lead to legal action being taken under the terms of the tenancy /lease.

Reference	Version	Created	Author	Review	Board Approved
Pets Guidance	1	September 2019		September 2022	

Rules for Pet Owners

5.15 Where a customer chooses to have a permitted pet, they must fulfil the following conditions:

- All animals must be kept in proper care, as defined in the Animal Welfare Act 2006. Customers must ensure any pets have an appropriate diet; protection from pain, suffering, injury and disease; the ability to exhibit normal behaviour patterns and a suitable environment to live with or apart from other animals; and are not left unattended for a significant amount of time.
- All animals must be kept in proper control and must not cause a nuisance to other customers.
- Customers must ensure that their pets do not emit unpleasant odours from their property.
- Animals must not be allowed to foul in public or communal areas. Any fouling must be cleared up immediately by the responsible customer.
- Animals must not damage ISHA property.
- Dogs must be kept on a lead in communal areas and must not enter children's play areas.
- Pet owners are responsible for complying with all legal requirements. All dogs over the age of 8 weeks must be microchipped and wear a collar and tag in public, in line with current regulations.
- Customers must not keep pet's offspring on the premises for longer than 8 weeks after the birth unless permission has been granted by ISHA.

Prohibited Activities

5.16 Customers must not keep any animals for the purpose of breeding.

5.17 The sale of pets from ISHA properties is strictly prohibited.

5.18 Customers must seek permission from ISHA if they wish to pet sit or have a pet reside within the property for more than one day.

5.19 Customers are responsible for ensuring any dogs visiting their property are accompanied by their owners and they do not cause a nuisance.

5.20 ISHA will not grant permission for customers to install cat or dog flaps where the fitting affects the integrity of fire doors.

5.21 We will investigate all complaints made about pets in line with our complaints policy and procedure. If the complaint relates to nuisance or anti-social behaviour, we will respond in line with our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

5.22 ISHA will seek support from Local Authorities on a case by case basis, where pets are causing a nuisance or deemed dangerous.

Reference	Version	Created	Author	Review	Board Approved
Pets Guidance	1	September 2019		September 2022	

5.23 Where a complaint is made about a pet being kept without permission, ISHA will investigate the complaint and decide the most appropriate way forward which could be to grant permission retrospectively or ask the customer to re-home the pet within a reasonable timeframe.

5.24 Where a complaint has been made, ISHA may consider legal action after all other options have been exhausted.

5.25 Where a pet has attacked, or endangered a customer or member of staff, ISHA will immediately report the incident to the police or local authority.

5.26 ISHA will report any complaint of animal cruelty immediately to the RSPCA and will report any stray pets to the relevant local authority

5.27 ISHA employees will support customers and involve the appropriate agencies, where customers are found to be hoarding animals, in line with our Hoarding Policy.

5.28 ISHA will contact the RSPCA if a resident has a court order banning them from keeping animals and we are aware of animals kept at the property

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY

6.1 All ISHA employees will follow our Health and Safety Policy and Lone Working Policy, at all times when dealing with customers and executing this guidance.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

7.1 The Association will act within the scope of the Diversity Policy and Equal Opportunities Statement when considering applications from customers.

7.2 ISHA will not withhold consent for assistance dog.

8. DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 ISHA will comply with data protection and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) legislation and ISHA's Privacy Statement when applying this guidance.

Reference	Version	Created	Author	Review	Board Approved
Pets Guidance	1	September 2019		September 2022	

8.2 We will only share personal data in relation to this guidance for the detection and prevention of crime or for the safeguarding of children or a vulnerable adult.

9. REVIEW

9.1 This guidance will be reviewed every three years (unless legislation, business or sector developments require otherwise), to ensure that it continues to meet the stated objectives and take account of good practice developments.

10. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Hoarding Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Pet Registration Form

Reference	Version	Created	Author	Review	Board Approved
Pets Guidance	1	September 2019		September 2022	