



# Pet Policy FAQs

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## Can my neighbours get any animals they like?

We think everyone has the right to live in their home safely and comfortably, and for that reason we do have some restrictions on what animals Stonewater customers can keep.

We will also not allow an unreasonable or unmanageable number of pets in one household.

We will not allow permission to keep any breed of dog banned under the 1991 Dangerous Dogs Act in our customers' homes.

The Dangerous Dogs Act bans the ownership, breeding, sale, exchange or advertising the sale of the following 'types' of fighting dogs:

- Pit Bull Terrier
- Japanese Tosa
- Dogo Argentino
- Fila Brasileiro

The Dangerous Dogs Act uses the word 'type' as the law does not only apply to pure breeds. Types are defined by the physical and behavioural characteristics of the prohibited dog.

We also will not give permission for:

- An animal that would require a licence under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
- Birds of prey
- Cattle, horses, livestock

It is illegal to sell, breed or give away an XL Bully dog.

XL Bullies (XL bulldogs) are not banned by law, but some new rules have come into place to regulate ownership of them.

If you have any concerns about neighbours with XL Bullies or any of the above listed dogs such as owning, breeding, selling or having them in communal areas without a muzzle, please report this to the police.

## Can Stonewater refuse permission for someone to keep a pet?

We have the right to refuse or revoke permission for a quantity, breed or type of pet if we believe that it is likely to cause a nuisance to other customers.

If this happens, we'll work with you to find a solution.

We will not refuse or remove permission for pets without reason and we won't refuse permission for a guide dog, welfare or assistance animal.

Customers do not need to ask permission to keep fish, small rodents, small birds or rabbits.

We won't grant permission to any resident to keep a pet who is subject to the following in the last three years:

- If there is a history of animal neglect or cruelty
- If there is a history of nuisance, annoyance or disturbance as a result of pet ownership

We won't allow customers to keep a pet if they are on a time-limited or lifetime ban on keeping an animal after prosecution by the RSPCA.

## Is there a cap to the number, type or breed of pets?

We will reserve the right to refuse or revoke permission for a number, breed

or type of pet where we believe that it is likely to cause nuisance to other customers.

Our Retirement Living customers told us that, due to properties being closer together and having more shared facilities, a maximum of two animals can be kept.

This does not include those small mammals, birds and fish listed above.

## How will you stop pets being a nuisance in public spaces?

It's important to us that we support everyone in the communities we serve, and that nobody is negatively affected by the pets kept in their neighbourhood.

### Stonewater does not allow:

- Pets to be kept or tethered in communal areas



- Pets in any inside communal areas other than corridors. This includes lounges except in the case of assistance dogs or with the agreement of others who use this area. Pets are not permitted in dining rooms, guest rooms or laundry rooms, with the exception of assistance dogs.
- The commercial breeding or boarding of pets in properties.
- Cat flaps to be fitted to properties.

**Pet owners should ensure that:**

- Pets do not cause annoyance, nuisance or disturbance to neighbouring persons or pets
- Pets are well cared for
- Pets do not foul in communal areas
- Gardens are kept clean, and fouling is cleared and disposed of hygienically
- Pets do not roam or stray in public spaces
- Dogs are kept on leads while in busy external communal spaces
- Pets are always kept on leads when travelling through internal communal spaces and courtesy is given to other residents passing them
- Pets do not cause a noise or odour nuisance
- Pets are kept under control and do not interfere with activities of Stonewater colleagues or our contractors
- Gardens are secure to prevent pets escaping
- Pets do not cause damage

- Pets are not maltreated or neglected

There may be conditions which we add to these in order to protect customers, our team or pets in specific cases.

**What happens if a complaint is made about a pet?**

Reports of nuisance or annoyance will be handled as anti-social behaviour cases and where complaints are received, we will work with customers to help them resolve the issues between themselves.

If a resolution can't be reached and we don't feel that the pet owner is engaging in the process, we may withdraw permission for a pet to be kept.

Where permission is withdrawn, customers will be notified in writing and a reasonable timeframe agreed to allow for rehoming. Legal action may also be taken in some cases.

We may also work with the local authority, Police, RSPCA or any other organisation that may support us to find a resolution.

**What should I do if I suspect an animal is being neglected?**

If you suspect that a neighbour is guilty of cruelty or neglect towards an animal, then you can report this to the RSPCA: <https://www.rspca.org.uk>

## How do I make a report about a neighbour's dangerous or nuisance pet?

We would always encourage residents to work with each other to resolve issues between themselves. If you cannot find a resolution, then you can [report the issue to us](#) and we will engage with the pet owner.

## What legislation has Stonewater used to create its Pet Policy?

There are a number of pieces of legislation which inform our pet policy. The main legislation is listed below.

**The Equality Act 2010** – it is a legal requirement of this act that Stonewater cannot discriminate against a disabled person, and this includes discrimination against a person with an 'assistance dog'.

Examples of assistance dogs can be guide dogs and hearing dogs for people with sensory loss or dogs to support people with disabilities, and they must be allowed under the terms of this Act.

**The Animal Health and Welfare Act 2006** – came into force in 2006 and introduced the concept of a 'duty of care', which means that people are legally obliged to ensure the welfare of the animals in their care. Although any pet would not be in the direct care of Stonewater itself, this act will inform the conditions we lay down for customers owning a pet, and the circumstances under which permission may be withdrawn, or further action taken.

**The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991** – makes it an offence to keep specific breeds of dogs, and must be taken into account when granting permission to a customer to keep a dog.

**The Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976** - aims to ensure that where private individuals keep dangerous wild animals they do so in circumstances which create no risk to the public and safeguard the welfare of the animals. Licences are required from the local authority for any animal which appears on a schedule to the Act.



## Are pets allowed in communal areas?

Other than communal corridors, pets will not be permitted in any communal areas such as lounges, except for assistance dogs or with the agreement of others who use this area.

Pets are not permitted in dining rooms, guest rooms or laundry rooms, except for assistance dogs.

## Are dogs allowed in communal play areas?

No. For hygiene reasons, dogs are not permitted into any children's play areas.

## Are dogs allowed off the lead in communal areas?

Other than communal corridors, pets will not be permitted in any communal areas such as lounges, except for assistance dogs or with the agreement of others who use this area.

Pets are not permitted in dining rooms, guest rooms or laundry rooms, except for assistance dogs.

Animals should always be kept on leads when travelling through internal communal spaces, with courtesy given to other residents passing them.

Animals should not be allowed to roam or stray in public spaces.

We advise that dogs are kept on leads while in busy external communal spaces.

## What should I do if my neighbour's dog is barking and disturbing me?

Your neighbours might not be aware that their dog is barking excessively or that it is bothering you.

Try to let them know that you are concerned about the dog and ask if everything is okay.

If that doesn't work, or you do not feel comfortable talking to your neighbour directly, contact your local Environmental Health Department.

They can investigate to see if a nuisance is being caused and may ask you to complete diary sheets.

A barking dog may not necessarily be experiencing neglect or ill-treatment.

The RSPCA has some helpful information on their [website](#) on how to address the issue.

If you have concerns over an animal's wellbeing or any abuse and/or neglect that may be occurring, contact the RSPCA.

**24 hour cruelty line  
0300 1234 999**

## **What happens if pets are found left behind in properties?**

If pets are found to have been left behind after a customer has moved out we will contact the appropriate authorities to arrange for their safe removal and care. The outgoing customer will be charged for this service.

## **What happens if Stonewater find a customer has neglected a pet's welfare?**

If we find that a customer has neglected a pet's welfare, or mistreated or caused unnecessary suffering to a pet, then we will notify the appropriate authorities.

Where this is brought to our attention by another organisation or third party, then they will also report it to the appropriate authorities. If this happens, permission to keep a pet will be withdrawn and never granted again.

## **What are the consequences of keeping a pet without permission?**

It is stated in our tenancy agreements that written permission is needed from us to keep a pet.

Where customers are found to be keeping pets without permission, this will be treated as a breach of the tenancy agreement.

If a customer is found to be keeping pets without our permission, then they must apply for permission within two weeks.

Normally, permission will be granted unless one of the exclusion categories listed applies or the named account holder prevents it. Where permission is granted, the customer must agree to abide by the conditions described in the pet guidance.

Where permission is refused, we will work with them to make arrangements for the permanent removal of the pet at the earliest opportunity.

If customers fail to comply, then legal action may be considered.





## What do I do if my neighbour gets a pet I am allergic to and we share a communal space?

Other than communal corridors, pets will not be permitted in any communal areas such as lounges, except for assistance dogs or with the agreement of others who use this area.

Pets are not permitted in dining rooms, guest rooms or laundry rooms, except for assistance dogs.

If you find that a neighbour's pet is getting too near to you and causing you an allergic reaction, then you should speak to the owner in the first instance.

You may find knowing the times of day the pet is normally walked can help you avoid them in the corridor. If a pet is coming to your property without the owner's knowledge, then they can help to stop it from happening again.

## What should I do if my neighbour's pet fouls in my garden?

In the first instance, you should speak to the owner as they may not be aware that their pet has done this.

Permission to keep pets includes owners agreeing to make sure that gardens are kept clean and fouling is cleared up and disposed of properly.

If they are a dog owner, they have a legal duty to clean up every time their

dog messes in a public place and can be issued an on-the-spot fine by their local council if they don't.

If your neighbour has a cat, it may be that they have no control over where the animal is fouling. In these instances, we would advise that you place deterrents in your garden to discourage the cat from coming in.

We would only become involved in these situations where the pet owner is deliberately allowing the animal to persistently foul and has not engaged in resolving the issue when raised.

## What should I do if my neighbour's dog bites me?

You are advised to call the Police, RSPCA and us to report the incident.

We will work with these parties to investigate the incident and take any necessary action.

## Contacting us

- Through MyHome by visiting **[myhome.stonewater.org](http://myhome.stonewater.org)**
- By email **[customers@stonewater.org](mailto:customers@stonewater.org)**
- Call us **01202 319119**

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