



# Pet Policy FAQs

*I want to get a pet, do I need permission?*





# Pet Policy FAQs

*I want to get a pet, do I need permission?*

## Do I need to gain permission to get a pet?

Permission for pets varies on the type of animal you want to get.

There are some small pets housed in cages, bowls and tanks which you do not need written permission for, but you should still follow the terms of your tenancy agreement.

Animals you do not need permission for:

- Fish (subject to the tank size being less than 150 litres)
- Hamsters
- Gerbils
- Small birds
- Mice
- Small reptiles & amphibians (excluded exotic pets which require a licence)
- Insects
- Rats
- Rabbits (in your own private garden or indoors)
- Guinea pigs (in your own private garden or indoors)

For all other animals, you must ask our permission before getting your pet(s). Failure to do so will put you in breach of your agreement with us.

## Are there any pets Stonewater will not give permission for?

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.

## XL Bullies

As of 31 December 2023, it is now illegal to sell, breed or give away an XL Bully dogs.

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

If you are asking for permission to keep an XL Bully, you must:

- Provide evidence that you had this dog before the ban came into place.
- Provide an exemption certificate for the dog as per legal guidance.

If you can't provide these then permission may not be granted.

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.

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

## What should I consider before getting a pet?

Before you get your pet, it's important to think about how you're going to keep the animal safe and happy.

Think about:

- The size and positioning of your home
- Space for your pet to exercise and go to the toilet
- Your own priorities and ability to care for your pet to meet its needs
- Extra costs – such as food, equipment and vets bills

Customers are legally responsible for the health and safety of any pet, making sure it has the right environment and

diet, behaves well and is protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

The animal's need to live with or apart from other pets should also be considered.

While you may be excited to get a cat or a dog, you may find that you are unable to care properly for some pets.

Dogs, for example, need to be walked twice a day to keep them healthy and obedient. Without exercise, they will become bored leading to behavioural problems such as chewing, excessive barking, jumping and hyperactivity. This can cause distress to the dog and nuisance to neighbours.

You can find information on looking after various types of pets by visiting the RSCPA Pet Care pages: [rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets](https://rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets)

## How do I gain permission to keep a pet?

If you want to get permission to keep a pet in your home, contact our [customer service centre](#).

They will be able to help you with the process, explain pet ownership conditions and discuss any lease restrictions with you.

We will need to know some basic details about the pet(s), such as type, breed and size. This will help us both to work out if the property/building is suitable for your pet, as some of our

homes are subject to lease restrictions which prevent us from being able to grant you permission.

If we're happy that your property is right for the pet you want, we will confirm it with you in writing, along with some pet ownership guidance and any terms on which permission is granted.

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

We have the right to refuse or revoke permission for a number, 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.

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 I can have?

When we carried out our surveys, you told us that you didn't think we should have a cap on the number of pets you can have in your home, and that you wanted to be trusted to make your own decisions on pet ownership.

We will, however, 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. If that happens, we'll work with you to reach a more suitable request.

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 previously mentioned.

## Can I keep outdoor animals in my garden?

The following outdoor animals can be considered for permission:

- Cockerels/chickens/ducks/geese
- Micro pigs
- Bees/beebees

All customers will need to seek written permission before obtaining these types of animals and we will consider the suitability of your home, scheme and neighbouring areas before approving.

## Do I need to have my own private garden to keep a pet?

This depends on the pet you are asking permission to keep.

We ask that you consider the size, positioning and type of your home, as well as how much space you have access to for your pet to exercise and go to the toilet.

We will not insist that you have your own private garden unless the housing of your pet impacts on the use of communal spaces by others.

Animals not permitted to be kept unless you have a private garden include:

- Rabbits/guinea pigs or similar based in outdoor hutches
- Cockerels/chickens/ducks/geese



- Micro pigs
- Bees/beehives

If you have a garden, you must keep the garden boundaries secure to stop pets escaping. You might want to put wire over gates with gaps in them as small dogs can fit through the bars, for example.

Where your animal uses a communal garden or space you must ensure that gardens are kept clean, and fouling is cleared up and disposed of properly.

If you are a dog owner, you have a legal duty to clean up every time your dog messes in a public place. You can be issued an on-the-spot fine by your local council if you don't.

You must also make sure animals do not roam or stray in public spaces. We advise that dogs are kept on leads while in busy external communal spaces.

## **Can I keep poultry (chickens, ducks or geese) in my garden?**

You will need to ask us for permission to keep poultry on your property. You must also check with your local council about any rules that may prevent you from keeping poultry, such as by-laws and planning restrictions.

We advise that you keep a minimum of two (due to them being social animals) and a maximum of six as adult hens lay on average two eggs every three days.

For more information on keeping chickens, the Poultry Club of Great Britain have advice on their website: <https://www.poultryclub.org/resources/poultry/housing-equipment-and-feed/>

## **What are my responsibilities if I want to keep poultry?**

The birds must be suitably housed and you must keep all poultry feed in closed containers so that it doesn't attract vermin.

If you no longer wish to keep poultry or you move from the property, you must return the garden to its original state.

Please check the current recommendations for keeping poultry issued by the [Department of Food, Environment and Rural Affairs](#).

## **What are my responsibilities if I have a pet?**

There are two main categories of your responsibility when keeping a pet: these are ensuring your pet's wellbeing and ensuring your pet does not cause nuisance to others.

Where we receive reports that either of these are not being met, we will work with customers to resolve the issues. We may take further action if customers are not engaging with us and the problems are having a negative impact on neighbours or the animal(s).

## Do I need to register with a vet?

Whatever animal you are looking to get, regardless of its age, you should register with a vet and get regular check-ups for your pet to keep them healthy and so that any problems can be treated quickly.

Many vets provide health care packages to spread the cost so you can keep up with regular appointments. Talk to your vet and see if they offer a health care scheme.

It is advised that you neuter or spay your animal as soon as it is old enough. This can prevent unwanted litters and behavioural problems as the animal gets older.

## Do I need to tag or microchip my pet?

It's important that your pet wears a collar and a tag with your contact details when outside, so it can be identified and help you get it back if it gets lost.

It is a legal requirement for dogs to wear a tag which bears the owners' name and address and failure to do so can lead to a fine of up to £2000. Dogs must also be microchipped which your vet can do for you.

Many pets can be microchipped including cats, dogs and rabbits - it's a great way to keep them safe. Microchipping can sometimes be done for free through animal welfare events and charities.

## What should I do if I am going on holiday or into hospital?

It's your responsibility to plan for someone to care for your pet if you're going on holiday or into hospital.

If you're out during the day, pets can become lonely, bored and start to display behavioural problems, which might have an impact on your pet and your neighbours.

If you can't get a pet sitter, exercise beforehand can help them to settle. Some pets also respond well to the sound of calming noises such as talk radio.





## Do I need to get pet insurance?

Vet bills can be very expensive and we strongly recommend that you take out pet insurance for your pet to help you if they need urgent or unexpected care.

Here are some of the benefits:

- Help with vet bills if your pet suffers illness or accident
- Dental treatment, farewell cover, lost and found and pets abroad cover
- Multi-pet discount - many insurers will offer you a discount for insuring more than one pet
- Third party liability (dogs only) - covers damage to someone or someone else's property

Find out more at:

[rspca.org.uk/shoponline/petinsurance/benefits](https://rspca.org.uk/shoponline/petinsurance/benefits)

## Where can I find further support?

There are many organisations who can help and support you in your pet ownership, from hints and tips on looking after your pet, to providing access to free services.

These include:

- RSPCA:  
[rspca.org.uk/utilities/aboutus/stayinformed](https://rspca.org.uk/utilities/aboutus/stayinformed)
- The Dogs Trust:  
[dogstrust.org.uk/latest/events](https://dogstrust.org.uk/latest/events)

- The Cat Protection League:  
[cats.org.uk/help-and-advice/cat-care-calendar](https://cats.org.uk/help-and-advice/cat-care-calendar)
- PDSA - You may find there comes a time where you need access to vets services you simply cannot afford. The PDSA are here to help those most in need: [pdsa.org.uk](https://pdsa.org.uk)



## How can I ensure my pet doesn't cause nuisance?

It's important to us that we support everyone in the communities we serve. The behaviour of your pet, or anyone visiting you that brings their pet with them, can have a huge impact on your neighbours.

Simple things like ensuring your pet isn't making excessive noise or fouling can help to keep the peace, but here are some other things you can do to make sure your pet isn't causing a nuisance:

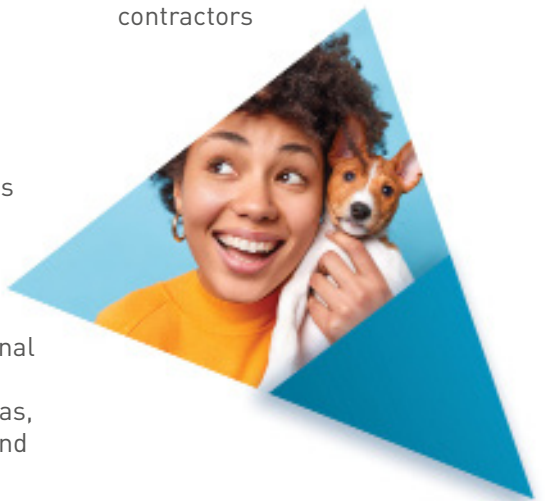
### Stonewater does not allow:

- 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, except for assistance dogs
- The commercial breeding or boarding of pets in properties
- Cat flaps to be fitted to properties

### You should ensure that:

- Your pets are well cared for
- Your pet does not foul in communal areas. If the animal does foul in any of the shared communal areas, you agree to remove the waste and clean the area

- Gardens are kept clean, and fouling is cleared and disposed of hygienically. If you are a dog owner, you have a legal duty to clean up every time your dog messes in a public place. You can be issued an on-the-spot fine by your local council if you don't
- Pets do not roam or stray in public spaces
- Dogs are kept on leads while in busy external communal spaces. This will prevent your dog running away or jumping on other dogs or people
- 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
- Your home is kept free from animal mess, fleas and vermin
- Pets are kept under control and do not interfere with activities of Stonewater colleagues or our contractors



- Pets do not cause annoyance, nuisance or disturbance to neighbouring people or pets.
- If your dog has access to a private garden, you must keep the garden boundaries secure to stop them escaping. Putting wire over gates with gaps in can stop small dogs getting through the bars.
- Pets do not cause damage to your property or shared area.
- 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 someone complains about my pet?

If we receive a justified complaint about your pet's welfare or the impact it has on others, we will work with you to resolve this in the first instance.

Reports of nuisance or annoyance will be handled as anti-social behaviour cases and where complaints are received, we will work with residents 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 your local authority, Police, RSPCA or any other organisation that may support us to find a resolution.

## Can someone visit me with their pet?

Yes, but we do ask that visitors follow the same guidance around pet behaviour as the customers who permanently live there.

## Do I need permission to look after a pet on a temporary basis?

This depends on the length of time you intend to keep the pet for.

You will require permission from us if you are keeping a pet on a temporary basis or on someone else's behalf if you expect it to last for more than four weeks.

You'll need to tell us how long you're looking after the animal and the times of day the pet will be cared for at the property.

If you need to take care of a pet in an emergency situation, such as a relative being admitted to hospital, you should seek permission as soon as is reasonably possible.

## Can I take my pet into 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.

## Can I use communal laundry facilities to wash my pet-related items?

Laundry facilities can be used to launder pet-related items such as bedding or clothing as long as you use a suitable and appropriate pet laundry bag during washing and drying to contain pet hair.

Where this is found not be effective, customers will be requested to find an alternative means of laundering pet bedding.

## Can I breed and sell animals from my property?

No. Customers are prohibited from breeding or selling animals on a commercial basis from their property. However, should your pet fall pregnant, you can rehome or sell the litter.

## Do I need permission for an assistance animal?

We will always grant permission for a customer to have an assistance animal.

Owners of assistance animals should advise us if you have an assistance animal in case of evacuations caused by fire or flood, for example.

Assistance dogs are specifically trained to help not only blind people, but also people with hearing difficulties, epilepsy, diabetes, physical mobility problems and more.

Assistance dogs carry out a variety of practical tasks for people as well as providing emotional and psychological wellbeing and improve the confidence of disabled people who use them.

Assistance dogs are not pets and are treated as 'auxiliary aids'. They are highly trained to the owner's requirements.

Any concerns raised regarding behaviour or wellbeing of assistance animals would be dealt with in the same way as for other pets.



## **Can I construct outside accommodation for a pet?**

Customers wishing to construct outside accommodation for a pet must apply for prior written permission.

This would only be agreed where your property has a private garden. Any such application must include details of the species to be housed and plans of the proposed construction.

## **Can I have a cat flap?**

No. Stonewater does not permit cat flaps to be installed into properties, irrelevant of the property types.

## **Can we have a communal pet?**

Communal pets will not be permitted as it can be difficult to ensure overall responsibility for the animal's welfare.

## **What happens if I am placed in temporary accommodation due to fire or flood and I am unable to care for my pets?**

If you have to move out of your home temporarily and you're unable to take your pet(s) with you, we will support you in finding suitable temporary accommodation for the animal(s).

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

It is stated in your tenancy agreement for you to obtain written permission from us to keep a pet.

If you get a pet without our permission, this will be treated as a breach of your tenancy agreement, so unless the pet you want is allowed without our consent (see the full list on page 3), please do ask us for permission.

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 you 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.

## Can I have an exotic pet?

We will review applications for exotic pets on a case by case basis.

An application for exotic pets such as snakes or spiders will be refused if the pet:

- Requires a licence and the customer does not hold one
- Could pose a safety risk to the household or neighbours should it escape

## What do I do if I can no longer take care of my pet(s)?

Owning pets can be extremely rewarding but it can also be a big responsibility and, although upsetting, sometimes giving up a pet is the right thing to do.

If you feel like you can no longer take care of your pet, you can give your pet the best chance of finding a happy home by:

- Contacting the original seller to see if they would be willing to take your pet back
- Contact a charity or rescue centre experienced in matching each pet with the right owner

You can find details of various rehoming charities on the RSPCA website:

[rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets/unwantedpets](https://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets/unwantedpets)

## Will I be charged if my pet damages my property?

As you are responsible for the behaviour of your pet, you may be charged if your pet damages either your property or communal spaces.

If your pet damages your home, we will ask you to fix it first. If your pet damages a communal area, we will carry out the work and you may be charged.



## Don't feel ready to have a pet? Why not volunteer instead!

There are a number of organisations that operate volunteering opportunities if you would like to be with animals but don't feel that you are ready to have a pet full time. These organisations include:

### Cinnamon Trust

Is a charity providing support for elderly and terminally ill people with pets. which operates all over the country. The organisation relies on volunteers to walk dogs, transport pets, and foster pets whose owners have difficulty caring for them. This can be a great way to help out someone in need, get to know other people in their community and combat loneliness. You can find out more on their [website](#).

### RSPCA

Your local RSPCA may be looking for volunteers to help walk dogs or assist with some other tasks, including helping transport sick or hurt wildlife. Find out what opportunities your local RSPCA have available on their [website](#).

### Blue Cross

Blue Cross is another national charity that may have volunteering opportunities in your area. See what's available on their [website](#).



Stonewater Limited  
Charitable Registered Societies No. 20558R.  
Registered Office:  
Suite C, Lancaster House, Grange Business Park,  
Enderby Road, Whetstone, Leicester, LE8 6EP.

