



A guide to

Keeping pets in your Stonewater home





Guidance for keeping a pet in your Stonewater home

This guidance has been created to encourage responsible pet ownership and make sure we support our customers who want to have pets and those who don't.

For more information and guidance, including FAQs and our pet policy, go to [stonewater.org](https://www.stonewater.org) and search for "pets".

Gaining permission

Permission is not required for small pets that live in cages, bowls and tanks but customers should still follow the terms of their tenancy agreement.

These are pets such as:

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

For pets that you need permission for, this guidance can help you to be a responsible pet owner and not break any terms of tenancy agreement with us.

Ensuring your pet's wellbeing

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.

Ensuring your pet's wellbeing *continued*

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

Registration at the vets

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.

Pet identification

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. 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.



When you're not home

It's your responsibility to make arrangements 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.

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

Ask the experts

There are many organisations that 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://www.rspca.org.uk/utilities/aboutus/stayinformed)

The Dogs Trust:
[dogstrust.org.uk/latest/events/](https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/latest/events/)

The Cat Protection League:
[cats.org.uk/help-and-advice/cat-care-calendar](https://www.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.



Ensuring your 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, with the exception of 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.

Complaints and nuisance

The last thing we want to do is remove permission to have pets, but we also have a duty to protect customers who tell us that pets are making life difficult for them.

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.



Contacting us

- Through MyHome by visiting myhome.stonewater.org
- By email customers@stonewater.org
- Call us
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