

Pets Policy

Version Control						
Version	Date drafted	Date approved	Approved by	Date Reviewed	Next review date	Owner
Final	27/08/20	17/09/20	Board	N/A	17/09/23	Operations Director
2023 Review				30.10.23	30.10.26	Operations Director

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Westmoreland Supported Housing Limited (WSHL) provides specialised supported housing. We work with Care Providers to deliver support for vulnerable adults with complex learning and physical disabilities and those with mental health needs, enabling them to live independently often as an alternative to a Care Home. We recognise the physical, emotional and mental benefits of pets but need to balance this with obligations we have to neighbours and others who share communal spaces.
- 1.2 We have a variety of leased homes that mainly consist of rooms in shared houses, flats in converted houses and flats in blocks. All customers are required to obtain permission before getting a pet and this policy sets out our approach to pets and service animals in properties managed by us.

2. Legal and Regulatory Requirements

- 2.1 The legal requirements are set out in the Tenancy Agreement and requires that customers seek permission before acquiring a pet.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 **Pet** - a domestic or tamed animal kept for companionship or pleasure.
- 3.2 **Service dog** - a dog that has been trained to assist a person who has a disability.

4. Requesting permission

- 4.1 In line with the Tenancy Agreement all customers or their advocates must get permission before keeping a pet. This request will need to give information of the type, size and number.
- 4.2 Customers should discuss their plans to acquire a pet with their Care Provider first and we will liaise with the Care Provider in arriving at our decision to give permission.
- 4.3 We will take into account a number of factors in considering permission including:
- The type of accommodation, see below
 - The needs of the other customers
 - The ability of the customer to care for the pet

5. Service dogs

- 5.1 Where a client has a specific need or disability which might be assisted by an officially trained service dog or other animal then this will be considered as long as it does not contravene any external constraints. Examples of service dogs which might be considered include:
- Guide dogs
 - Hearing dogs
 - Medical detection dogs
 - Assistance dogs for people with a disability

6. Shared accommodation

- 6.1 In shared accommodation clients will, in some circumstances, be allowed to have a small pet such as a small caged bird or a small caged animal such as a hamster or a fish. Permission will not generally be given to have roaming animals e.g. cats or dogs.

7. Self-contained accommodation

7.1 Where customers live in self-contained accommodation, they may be allowed to keep a pet, however they must always receive permission before acquiring any animal including small caged animals that are not roaming. In arriving at our decision, we will take into account the following:

- Recommendations from support staff.
- The benefits to the customer.
- The size and nature of the animal in relation to the size of the accommodation and garden.
- The ability of the customer to adequately care for the animal and pay for food, vet bills and other associated costs.
- Potential nuisance factor to others.
- Potential damage, smells or hygiene issues.
- Any other relevant factors at the time.

8. Responsibility for pets

8.1 Where permission is granted to keep a pet this will be done in writing and the customer must assume full responsibility for the well-being and behaviour of their pet, including ensuring:

- The pet is properly fed and cared for.
- The pet's behaviour does not negatively impact on others e.g. noise, smell, hygiene etc.
- The pet does not cause damage to the property and, where damage is caused, pays for any repairs.

8.2 If a member of staff feels that a customer is neglecting or mistreating an animal in their care we will report the matter to the relevant animal welfare agency.

8.3 If the customer is no longer able to look after the pet due to ill health or a change in their needs, we will work with the Care Provider to rehome the pet through agencies and charities as appropriate.

9. Monitoring and review

9.1 We will keep records of where permission is given to keep a pet and ensure that the terms of the permission are maintained. If the keeping of a pet causes anti-social behaviour or any other breaches of tenancy, this will be dealt with through our anti-social behaviour policy and procedure.

9.2 This policy will be reviewed every three years.