



Pets Policy

Version 1

Approved by: Executive Team

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Policy outlines our approach to dealing with pets in residents' homes.

1.2 This Policy applies to residents living in:

- General needs properties
- Retirement properties (including Extra Care)
- Shared Ownership and leasehold properties
- Supported Housing.

1.3 We encourage responsible pet ownership; balancing the positive impact pets can have, while ensuring they don't negatively affect others or cause a nuisance.

1.4 Where we use "you" or "your" we mean residents. The terms 'we', 'our' and 'us' mean Optivo.

2.0 Keeping a pet

2.1 Your occupancy agreement should set out if we allow pets and, if so, if you need permission. In some blocks, where we do not own the freehold, we will be bound by the rules of the freeholder and what is in our agreement with them. If you live in such a block or if you're unsure what's in your agreement, you should ask us to check for you.

2.2 We encourage responsible pet ownership, in accordance with the [Animal Welfare Act 2006](#). We'll involve the RSPCA immediately where we suspect animal cruelty or neglect and encourage anyone who reports concerns about a pet to us, to do the same.

2.3 We'll contact the RSPCA if you have a court order banning you from keeping animals and we are aware you have animals at the property.

3.0 Your responsibilities

3.1 You must keep animals in a reasonable manner and not allow them to cause a nuisance to anyone or cause damage to your home. You must not keep, or allow visitors to bring to your home, any livestock or animal classed as wild or dangerous in law. Visitors can bring animals to your home for temporary periods of time, as long as they don't cause nuisance to neighbours.

3.2 We may ask you to keep animals in a separate room when we visit your home e.g. contractors visiting to carry out a repair. You and your visitors must keep dogs on a lead at all times in communal areas of our buildings and grounds.

3.3 Failure to meet these expectations may be a breach of your Tenancy Agreement.

4.0 When you need our permission

4.1 You must obtain our permission before you get a pet, if you:

- Live in a self-contained flat, maisonette or shared house and you'd like to have a pet (except small pets, such as hamsters, gerbils and goldfish)
- Want more than one cat or dog and you live in a house or bungalow with a private garden
- Want to run a pet related business from home e.g. grooming, dog walking, pet sitting
- Want to install dog or cat flaps - we need to check the flaps will not affect the door's fire safety.

4.2 When you request permission, we'll consider:

- The terms and conditions of your occupancy agreement
- The suitability of the accommodation:
 - size and type of the property
 - size and species of the pet
 - house rules for shared houses
 - access to outside spaces
 - communal areas
 - number of pets in the block.
- Your ability to care for the pet including any previous issues if you previously had pets
- Local issues relating to pets and anti-social behaviour
- Any breaches of tenancy relating to noise
- Whether this is a temporary arrangement e.g. a family member is in hospital.

4.3 We'll grant permission for an assistance dog.

4.4 Before we grant permission, we'll ask you to sign a Pet Agreement. If we don't give permission, we'll contact you to explain why.

4.5 Where we discover a pet is being kept without our knowledge, we may give permission retrospectively if other conditions for keeping a pet can be met.

4.6 If you feel we've refused a request for a pet unfairly, you can appeal by following our [Complaints Resolution Policy](#).

5.0 Restrictions

5.1 We won't allow you to keep:

- Any animal listed in the [Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976](#) including large or venomous snakes and certain types of spider.
- Dogs listed in the [Dangerous Dog Act 1991](#) Section 1
- Farm animals e.g. sheep, goats, pigs, cattle, horses, cockerels.
- Bees
- Pets in guest rooms.

5.2 You must not bury pets in any private or communal garden

6.0 What if there is a problem?

6.1 If there are problems with a pet in your home e.g. noise complaints, we'll work with you to solve any problems in line with our [Anti-Social Behaviour Policy](#).

6.2 If pets cause damage to your homes, we'll charge you in line with our [Chargeable Repairs Policy](#).

6.3 We will ask you rehome your pet(s) if:

- You are keeping pet(s) where we wouldn't give permission or refused your request
- Your pet is causing a nuisance and you are not working with us to resolve this
- Your pet is causing a nuisance and there are no further options to solve this
- Your pet attacks or injures other animals or people
- Your pet is causing damage to the property or the condition of your property is unhygienic because of your pets
- You have too many pets in your home.

6.4 If we ask you to rehome any pet, we'll tell you why and discuss with you a timescale for you to remove the pet from your home. We'll confirm our agreement in writing.

6.5 We expect you to engage with us and help resolve problems. We may take possession proceedings for breach of tenancy if you fail to put right any problems or fail to rehome your pet within a reasonable time.

7.0 Review

7.1 We will review this Policy to address legislative, regulatory, best practice, or operational issues.