

Keeping pets in your home



We know that owning a pet can be really enjoyable and good for your health. However, we need to prevent irresponsible pet ownership, which can cause suffering to animals and a nuisance to neighbours.

Before deciding to keep a pet you should ask yourself:

- How committed am I to owning and caring for a pet(s)?
- Does the pet/s fit my lifestyle and family circumstances?
- Is my home suitable for this pet(s)?
- Is there easy access to outdoor areas? Do I live near a busy road? Is my flat suitable for the type of pet(s) I want to keep?
- How much is it going to cost? You can budget for some items, such as the initial cost of the pet(s), equipment it needs, and regular costs such as food, bedding and insurance. But what about unexpected costs such as vets' bills?
- Can I afford to microchip my dog(s)?
- What will happen to my pet(s) if I'm away from home or on holiday?
- Could my pet(s) cause a nuisance to my neighbours? Most of us want to get on well with our neighbours. Consider having a chat with them before you make the final decision.
- Who would look after my pet(s) if I was taken ill? In Sheltered Schemes we ask for confirmation that someone will take responsibility for your pet(s) if you're no longer able to.

Other issues to consider:

Is there a local vet who can care for my animal?

- Will my pet need regular vaccinations, or regular worm and flea control?
- If you are planning to keep a dog or cat, we recommend you have it neutered. Animal charities encourage this to reduce the number of unwanted pets.
- Small rodents such as hamsters can have 14-20 babies in a litter, so you can have a population explosion on your hands if you don't keep males and females apart!



Applying to keep a pet

Your tenancy agreement or lease agreement will tell you if you're allowed to keep a pet. Please read it to find out whether you need to apply to us for permission.

In some of our homes you're not allowed, for example Temporary Accommodation Schemes or The Dome.

If you have permission to keep a pet and are moving to another Raven home, you will need to re-apply for permission.

You do not need permission to keep a pet if you:

- live in a rented house with its own private enclosed garden or have direct access to the road and want to keep one cat, one dog or one rabbit or hamster
- have an assistance dog, such as a guide or emotional support dog
- keep up to five small birds or up to five small caged rodents (hamsters, mice or gerbils only).
- keep up to five fish

You need our permission to keep most other types of pet, including:

- more than 1 cat, dog, rabbit or hamster, etc
- chicken(s), duck(s) etc
- reptile(s)
- insect(s)
- more than five fish, and
- more than five small birds or small caged rodents.

Animals you will not normally be given permission to keep

You must not keep:

- farm animals such as sheep, goats, pigs, cattle or horses
- animals licensed under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976. More information can be found here - www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2007/2465/schedule/made
- types of dogs named in the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991. More information can be found here - www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/65/section/1

Applications for permission

To apply to keep a pet(s), you should fill in an application form which is available from:

- Raven House, Linkfield Lane, Redhill, RH1 1SS
- your Housing Officer
- MyRaven

You'll need to tell us about the pet(s) you want to keep and must agree to be responsible for it and ensure it does not cause a nuisance to neighbours.

What our standard tenancy agreement says about pets

You must not:

- keep any animal that is unsuitable such as wild, dangerous or poisonous creatures, or livestock.
- cause a nuisance by breeding animals or birds in your home.
- allow any animal you keep at home to cause a nuisance or danger to anyone in the neighbourhood.
- allow your home to become hazardous to health.
- keep a dangerous dog at your home.
- leave your dog on its own for long periods as it may become distressed and bark, causing a nuisance to your neighbours.

You must:

- keep all animals in suitable enclosures from which they cannot escape.
- keep your dog on a lead in communal areas and on our land.
- clean up after your dog or cat by removing and disposing of droppings hygienically, using dog bins if provided.

If a pet(s) causes damage to your home or nuisance to anyone in your neighbourhood, we will take action against you and may ask you to remove it from your home.

What is nuisance behaviour by a pet?

While most pet(s) are well behaved, some cause a nuisance to other people. Often the problem is not the type of pet but the way its owner cares for it and controls it. Examples of nuisance caused by neglectful owners include:

- the smell of pet(s) kept in unhygienic conditions
- the noise of dog(s) barking for long periods
- pet(s) fouling in communal areas and gardens, where the mess is not cleared up immediately
- pet(s) fouling in neighbours' gardens
- keeping too many animals in a property
- aggressive animals
- food left outside, which attracts vermin like rats, and other animals

Remember, you're responsible for your pet(s) and their behaviour at all times. If a neighbour approach you with a problem, try to sort it out amicably.



What to do if you are having trouble with your neighbour's pets

If you feel you can, approach the owner and see if you can sort out the matter informally.

Here are some tips:

- act early – don't wait until the situation is unbearable
- try not to jump to conclusions – listen to what the other person says
- try to remain calm
- if you feel at risk or threatened, then walk away

Further information can be found on our website - www.ravenht.org.uk/resolve-asb - or you can speak to your Neighbourhood Warden or Tenancy Services Officer.

What we can do about nuisance pets

In most cases we will try to resolve the issue informally after hearing both sides of the story. If this does not work, we can take various steps, including:

- involving a professional mediator.
- withdrawing permission (with granted or implied by the tenancy) for the animal.
- involving voluntary organisations such as the RSPCA.
- involving statutory organisations such as the police or the council's Environmental Health Department, or a Local Authority Dog Warden where available.
- restricting the number of animals kept at a property, if this is likely to resolve the problem.

What we can do about nuisance pets continued

- making responsible pet ownership part of an Acceptable Behaviour Contract – a formal contract signed by us, the person causing the problem, and in some cases a third party such as the police
- getting an injunction (a kind of court order) to stop the owner doing certain things or to remove the animal
- other legal action, or action for breach of tenancy – which may include seeking possession



Dog Wardens

Dog Wardens may be able to assist with Microchipping, reports of fouling, reports of irresponsible ownership or reports of stray dogs

Reigate and Banstead - www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/info/20059/anti-social_behaviour/441/dogs

Mid-Sussex - www.midsussex.gov.uk/environment-net-zero/dogs/

Horsham - www.horsham.gov.uk/environmental-health/stray-dogs

Tandridge - www.tandridge.gov.uk/Parks-play-and-things-to-do/Dogs

What if your pet dies?

We understand how difficult it can be to lose a beloved pet. To help ensure a safe and respectful environment for everyone, we kindly ask that you do not bury deceased animals on Raven-owned land, including communal and private gardens. For practical information and compassionate support, please reach out to Pet Bereavement Support Services.

Pet Bereavement Support

No one should face the pain of losing a pet alone, and the blue cross offer a pet loss support service. This is a free and confidential service and contact can be made in the following ways:

Helpline - 0800 096 6606

Webchat - www.bluecross.org.uk/pet-bereavement-and-pet-loss

Email - plsmail@bluecross.org.uk

What to do if you suspect an animal is being neglected

If you suspect that a neighbour is guilty of cruelty or neglect towards an animal, then you should report this to the RSPCA.

Call the 24-hour National Cruelty and Advice Line on 0300 1234 999. The RSPCA will ask you some questions and will keep your details confidential.

Pets and the law

Pet ownership in the UK is governed by various laws designed to ensure the welfare and protection of animals.

The Animal Welfare Act 2006 is the primary piece of legislation, placing a duty of care on pet owners to provide for their animals' needs, including a suitable environment, a suitable diet, and protection from pain, suffering, injury, and disease.

Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 prohibits ownership of certain breeds deemed dangerous and mandates responsible behaviour to prevent dog attacks.

The Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015 requires all dogs to be microchipped and registered to an approved database by the time they are eight weeks old.

Local councils also have specific by-laws concerning pet ownership, such as restrictions on the number of pets per household and regulations on pet waste disposal, which help maintain public health and safety standards.

You're responsible for ensuring that any pets or livestock kept at the property are registered with the appropriate government agencies, as required. This includes registration of poultry such as chickens, which must be registered with the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) within one month of being kept on the property.

Surrey is currently classified as a high-risk area for avian influenza, and keeping birds may require additional measures.

It is your responsibility to check and comply with all current regulations and guidance.



Useful contacts

RSPCA

The RSPCA is a charity that investigates complaints of cruelty and neglect. It runs animal hospitals and clinics for pets from low-income households, and centres that house dogs looking for new homes. It also gives general advice on animal care and welfare and campaigns on animal welfare issues. It may help with the cost of neutering.

Website: www.rspca.org.uk

Dogs Trust

The Dogs Trust is a dog welfare charity providing advice on all aspects of dog ownership. It runs 18 centres across the UK for dogs looking for new homes. It campaigns about animal welfare and runs education programmes. It subsidises neutering and provides free micro-chipping in certain areas.

Website: www.dogstrust.org.uk

FREE Behaviour Support Line: 0303 003 6666

Cats Protection

Cats Protection is a charity that provides advice on cat care and runs a rescue and re-homing service for cats. It may help with the cost of neutering cats. The organisation has a number of branches across England and Wales.

Phone: 03000 12 12 12

Website: www.cats.org.uk

PDSA

The People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA) is a charity that runs animal clinics to provide veterinary care for sick animals owned by low-income households.

Phone: 0800 731 2502

Website: www.pdsa.org.uk

Blue Cross

The Blue Cross provides subsidised pet-neutering services and food bank for pet food for people who get certain state benefits.

Phone: 0300 790 9903

Website: www.bluecross.org.uk

The Cinnamon Trust

This charity provides practical support for older people and their pets.

Phone: 01736 757900

Websire: www.cinnamon.org.uk