



## Pets Policy

<b>Lead Manager:</b>	Neighbourhood Manager
<b>Responsible Senior Manager:</b>	Assistant Director Neighbourhoods
<b>Approved By:</b>	Customer Committee
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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Shropshire Towns and Rural Housing (STAR) is an Arms' Length Management Organisation; (ALMO) and manages the stock on behalf of Shropshire Council. It is responsible for the Council's housing stock including the letting, maintenance, and management of its properties and estates.
- 1.2 This Policy establishes the rules and conditions under which tenants may keep a pet in a Shropshire Council (STAR Housing Managed) property.
- 1.3 Under the terms and conditions of their tenancy agreement with Shropshire Council tenants have the right to enjoy their home.
- 1.4 STAR Housing accepts that for some tenants this may also include keeping a pet or pets and acknowledges that research indicates that pets can have a positive effect on their owner's physical and mental health.
- 1.5 However, STAR Housing also acknowledges that irresponsible pet ownership can cause distress to other tenants, the public, staff and unnecessary suffering for the animal or animals.
- 1.6 The aim of this policy is to:
  - Provide a clear and transparent pet policy.
  - Ensure that keeping pets does not cause a nuisance or annoyance to others.
  - Ensure that keeping pets does not affect the condition of the property.
  - Enable STAR housing to take appropriate action when problems arise due to tenants keeping pets.

## 2. Legal Framework and Context

- 2.1 The **Housing Act 1985** Specifies the tenant's right to be informed about the terms of their tenancy. The Act also specifies a tenant's right to consultation; STAR housing's pet policy will be developed with consultation and approval from tenant representatives.
- 2.2 **Equality Act 2010.** Assistance dogs must be allowed in STAR Housing properties in accordance with this act. Assistance dogs include guide dogs for the blind; hearing dogs for the deaf; dogs for the disabled or support dogs.

**2.3 Animal Health and Welfare Act 2006.** This act came into force in 2007 and introduced the concept 'duty of care', which means that people are legally obliged to ensure the welfare of animals in their care. No pet would be in the direct care of STAR Housing; however, this policy will inform you of the conditions laid down for tenants of owning a pet and the circumstances under which action for breach of tenancy may be taken.

**2.4 Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.** This makes it an offence to keep certain breeds of dogs and must be taken into consideration when granting permission to a tenant wanting to keep a dog. The following types of dogs are specified as dangerous in this act:

- Pit Bull Terrier
- Dogo Argentino
- Fila Brasileiro
- Japanese Tosa
- American XL bully (added 2023)

**2.5 The Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015 – Microchipping of dogs**

### **3. Policy Statement**

3.1 Tenants or any person living in the property may only keep domestic pets if they do not cause a nuisance or annoyance to anyone living, working, or visiting the locality or do not cause any damage to the property.

3.2 We may ask tenants to remove any pet if it causes nuisance or annoyance or damage to the property. On request tenants must provide details of any pets in the property.

3.3 Tenants or any person living in the property must not keep dogs in flats with shared communal areas unless they are assistance dogs in accordance with the legislation which applies at the time of the tenancy.

3.4 Tenants or any person living in the property, must not breed any animals from their property as a business.

3.5 Areas with Local Lettings Plans may have specific criteria in place to address issues of concern within the neighborhood, this may mean the keeping of dogs (except for Assistance dogs) is not allowed.

3.6 Tenants must ensure that pets are kept under control and do not cause nuisance or annoyance to neighbors and visitors. This includes fouling, noise, and odors from pets.

3.7 From 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016 all dog owners must ensure that their dogs are microchipped, and the details are kept up-to-date, failure to do so can result in a fine of up to £500.00.

- 3.8 Tenants are legally responsible for the health and welfare of any pet, and they must ensure it has a suitable environment; a suitable diet; receives sufficient exercise; is able to exhibit normal behavior patterns; and is protected from pain, suffering, injury, and disease. The animals' need to be housed with or apart from other animals should also be considered.
- 3.9 Customers must not leave animals unattended for a period of time that will result in the welfare needs of the animal not being met and should have suitable arrangements in place for their care if they go away.
- 3.10 Pets will not be permitted in communal rooms or guest bedrooms except assistance dogs.
- 3.11 If you move to your home via a Mutual Exchange your request to keep an animal/pet will be assessed in line with this policy regardless of the outgoing customers circumstances and any animals/pets, they keep.
- 3.12 We encourage responsible pet ownership, in accordance with the Animal Welfare Act 2006. We will 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.
- 3.13 We will contact the RSPCA if you have a court order banning you from keeping animals and we are aware you have animals at the property.
- 3.14 In the event your pet sadly passes away it must not be buried in communal grounds
- 3.15 Failure to meet these expectations may be a breach of your Tenancy Agreement

#### **4. Consultation**

- 4.1 ST&RH will consult on a regular basis with staff, outside agencies and tenant groups and Area Panels to promote continuous improvement and develop good practice in this policy.

#### **5. Review**

- 5.1 ST&RH will review this Policy on a 3 yearly basis, unless changes in legislation or regulation require an earlier review.

#### **6. Training**

- 6.1 STAR Housing will provide all staff responsible for implementing this policy with comprehensive training.

## 7. Roles and Responsibilities

All employees	General overview of Policy
Neighbourhood Housing Officers	Implementation of Policy
Senior Neighbourhood Officers	Line Management Responsibility of neighbourhood officers in the implementation of this policy
Neighbourhood Manager	Overall responsibility for the operational day to day implementation of this policy. Monitoring performance indicators and management information and day to day oversight of the quality of service and outcome
Assistant Director of Housing	Accountable for the implementation of this policy and for reporting performance to key stakeholders including SMTs, ET and CCB

## 8. Equality and Diversity

- 8.1 We will ensure that this policy is applied fairly and consistently to all our customers. We will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group of people because of their race, religion, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, or any other grounds set out in our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion policy.
- 8.2 When applying this policy, we will:
- Act sensitively towards the diverse needs of individuals and communities
  - Take the necessary positive action to reduce discrimination and harassment in local communities.
- 8.3 This policy and any other related publications of Shropshire Towns and Rural Housing are available on request in other formats (e.g. in an alternative language, in Braille, on tape, in large type).