

Appendix 1

RSPCA Publication "Housing, a Guide to Good Practice" Summary of Recommendations

1. The Basics

- i. "Housing providers should not discourage pets where facilities exist for their proper care. Controls are necessary, however, to prevent irresponsible pet ownership"
- ii. "In all written policies, the key questions to address are whether the policies are enforceable and whether they will be enforced by housing officers"
- iii. "It is also important to ensure that pet owners generally, or owners of specific pets, such as dogs are not vilified through policy. While there may be a need for greater conditions on some pets, they need to be proportionate to the problem and clearly explained to the residents"

2. The RSPCA state that the following should be included in a basic pet policy, and included in the tenancy agreement where possible

- i. **"A clear statement that the owner is responsible for their pets' welfare, as defined under the Animal Welfare Act 2006"**

This should be based on the "duty of care in Section 9" (see Appendix 2). There should be a clear process for dealing with any animal welfare/cruelty complaints

- ii. **"A clear statement that the owner must ensure that the pet does not cause a nuisance and is not to be used in an anti social manner"** This needs to "include clear details of what is expected from a responsible owner" A clear process for dealing with nuisance should be established which includes, "where applicable, working with other agencies such as the police and the RSPCA"

iii. "The RSPCA advises that - as with the majority of low-level complaints - positive action towards an improvement is sought in the first instance, and that the pet owner is directed to sources of information and advice"

iv. **"Clear guidance on which pets are allowed, where they are allowed, where they are not, and how many pets a tenant can have"**

"We recommend that this guidance should have the flexibility to assess individuals' requests on a case-by-case basis"

v. **"Conditions that tackle indiscriminate breeding and accidental ownership"**

"The breeding and sale of animals should be prohibited on premises that housing providers manage". This will:

- help encourage responsible pet ownership
- reduce the number of "accidental owners" (obtaining pets from friends/neighbours without really thinking about the animals' welfare needs)
- avoid environmental nuisance

vi. **"A clear policy on pets left behind in properties"**

This is when a resident goes into hospital, or leaves the property without taking their pet.

vii. **"Clear procedures on common pet-related problems"**

Allowing animals to stray repeatedly, fouling, excessive noise, animal neglect/hoarding

2. Going beyond the basic standard

"The provision of a basic pets policy, which is both enforceable and enforced, is essential if there is to be a consistent and effective approach to the issues arising from pets in housing. In order to tackle the root of the problem before it takes hold, however, a more

proactive approach must be taken and preventative measures put in place”

i) Microchipping and neutering

“housing providers should promote both (micro chipping and neutering) to residents. Micro chipping “makes traceability easier, and in turn helps tackle straying, fouling and nuisance and ASB issues”. Neutering is “an effective way of preventing unwanted litters..(and) may also prevent illnesses and some unwanted behaviours”

ii) Education

“Educating residents and staff can play an important part in tackling some key pet ownership problems. It can take many forms, from printed and online information to holding events that include a vet consultation or discounted micro chipping”

iii) Multi-agency working

“At a time of shrinking budgets and increasing workloads, working with other organizations is essential when tackling some of the issues surrounding pets in housing”

“Partnership working can also provide training and advice, particularly in the area of animal welfare”

iv) Pets of vulnerable tenants placed in self-contained accommodation

“In the majority of situations it is hoped that pet ownership.. doesn’t form a barrier to an individual being offered an overnight hostel or temporary accommodation”

This applies to homeless persons seeking hostel accommodation. Other residents may require emergency housing due to a crisis situation, such as fire, major works, harassment, or domestic violence.

