



<b>Title: Responsible Pet Policy</b>
<b>Originator: Communities Director</b>
<b>Approval body and date approved: ELT 17 August 2022</b>
<b>Date for review: August 2025</b>

## 1. Introduction

This policy outlines Magenta Living's approach to responsible pet ownership. The policy has been updated to align with the principles of the Social Housing White Paper, Magenta Living is supportive of allowing the keeping of pets provided they are well looked after and do not adversely affect the lives of neighbours. Magenta Living understands that pets can contribute to positive mental health. This policy should be considered in conjunction with Magenta Living's Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy.

The terms of the individual tenancy agreement and any current, or future legislation will always take precedence over this policy. Operating of this Policy considers the following legislation:

- Housing Act 1988 (as amended)
- The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 (as amended in 1997)
- The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- The Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- Animal Welfare Act, 2006

## 2. Statement of Intent

Magenta Living recognises that keeping pets can offer significant benefits to their owners. However, irresponsible ownership can cause nuisance and affect the quality of life for other residents in an area and will not be tolerated. Customers wishing to own a pet must apply to Magenta Living for permission in most cases. Magenta Living will not unreasonably withhold consent. Operation of the Policy demonstrates a commitment to making fair and consistent decisions in response to customer requests to keep pets and supports the principles of The Animal Welfare Act 2006.

The policy applies to social and affordable properties owned and managed by Magenta Living. The Policy does not apply to Magenta Living leaseholders, or shared owners.

### **3. Policy**

For the purpose of this policy, a pet is defined as any domesticated or tamed animal that is kept as a companion and cared for responsibly.

#### **3.1 Application and Permission**

Magenta Living will consider all requests from customer to grant permission to keep a pet at their home. Permission is **not** required for small fish, birds or mammals which are housing in cages, bowls or tanks inside the home.

The Pet Application Form should be completed and submitted to the Neighbourhood Housing Officer. New Tenants should complete an application form at the application stage. All applications will be treated fairly and the following will be taken into account:

- Property type – house, bungalow or flat
- Size of the property
- The size of the outside space
- If the property has a communal or individual garden
- The location of the property
- Where the property is part of a scheme e.g., extra care, sheltered or high rise
- Where the property is located
- The nature of the pet or animal
- The nature and type of animal to be kept
- Maximum number of permitted pets

#### **3.2 Permission is unlikely to be granted for the following:**

- Any large animal (unsuitable to be kept indoors)
- Any animals that have to be kept outdoors (including caged birds, pigeons or similar)
- Any wild animals
- Any banned breeds e.g., those classified under the dangerous dogs act
- Any animals that are a danger due to being poisonous or venomous
- Any animal classes as livestock other than Chickens
- Where there is a high likelihood of animals creating a statutory nuisance e.g. through noise
- Any permission for breeding or commercial activity associated with pet or animal ownership
- There will be a maximum number of two dogs at any one property. The number of any other animals will be limited dependent on the factors listed in 3.1.

### **3.3 Welfare**

Where permission is granted, tenants are responsible for the health and welfare of their pets. Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, this is called a duty of care. This requires proper day-to-day management and care of the pet. If tenants have any questions about the care of their pets they should contact their vet or a suitable accredited animal welfare organisation. No pet should be left in the property when the tenant is away unless clear arrangements have been made to provide adequate care. If it is suspected that a tenant has abandoned a property, and left a pet behind, the RSPCA will be informed immediately. If any staff member has concerns over how a pet is being treated they will make a report to the RSPCA.

It is recommended that dogs and cats are permanently identified by microchip and the identification details registered.

### **3.4 Prohibited activity / Antisocial Behaviour**

All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure dogs do not defecate in internal or external communal areas, including grassed areas of an estate. If a dog does defecate in a communal area, faeces must always be removed immediately. Dogs must always be kept on a lead when in public or communal areas. They must never be let out on their own – this includes communal balconies and stairwells. If cats are allowed free access outside, then steps must be taken to ensure they do not cause nuisance to neighbours.

Tenants have a duty to look after their pets responsibly and must not allow them to cause a nuisance to their neighbours, any member of their own household or any other member of the public. Tenants will also be held responsible for the behaviour of any pets brought into their homes or neighbourhoods by their visitors. If a pet is found to be causing a nuisance or annoyance, Magenta Living will manage the incident in line with its Anti-social Behaviour policy.

#### **The following are examples of incidents that will be recorded and managed as antisocial behaviour:**

- Excessive barking or any other loud noise causing a disturbance;
- Dogs or any other animals being used to intimidate people;
- Pets causing damage to Magenta Living property beyond reasonable wear and tear;
- Failing to keep pets under control when Magenta staff or its contractors are present at the property;

- Any other behaviour considered to be causing a nuisance or annoyance.

**Magenta Living will consider taking the following action against tenants allowing their pets to cause a nuisance:**

- Issuing the tenant with a verbal and/or written warning
- Incorporating expectations regarding the control of pets within an Acceptable Behaviour Contract
- Withdrawing permission and requesting that the tenant has the pet re-homed within 14 days of notification
- Reporting an incident to the Police
- Taking legal action to obtain an injunction order
- Taking legal action to obtain a possession order as a last resort.

### **3.5 Existing Pet Owners**

Where Magenta Living tenants have existing pets prior to the publication of this Policy and they do not have express written permission to keep them, Magenta Living may allow them to remain on a discretionary basis, provided:

- No complaints have been received
- No damage to property has been caused as a result of the keeping of the pet or animal
- No concerns as to the animal's welfare exist and the suitability of the animal or pet to the type of accommodation.

## **4 Implementation**

The policy will be effective from July 2022. The policy will be available for staff to access on Insite. The policy will be uploaded to the Magenta Living website. The policy should also be read in conjunction with the following associated policies and procedures:

- Tenancy Policy
- ASB Policy
- ASB Procedure

The Neighbourhood Housing Team are responsible for the administration and application of the Pet application process. Any ASB issues arising from the ownership of pets will be investigated by the Neighbourhood Housing Team and where applicable the Tenancy Enforcement Team.

Any complaint in respect to the implementation of the policy or decision regarding permissions will be dealt with through the complaints procedure.

## 5 Consultation

Consultation took place through MAGENTA CONNECT and social media during February 2022. The majority of customers were in favour of removing blanket bans on dogs and cats in flat accommodation and should be through a permission basis. The policy has been updated to reflect this feedback. Internal colleagues and SLT have also been consulted. All views have been fully considered and incorporated where applicable/appropriate within the body of the policy.

## 6 Equality Analysis (EA)

We believe all people should be treated with dignity and respect regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including, nationality, ethnic or national origins), religion, belief or non-belief, sex, or sexuality or by association with someone with any of these characteristics or perception of having any of these characteristics.

The EA was undertaken on 11 August 2022 by Clare Moore, Sam Cummins and Justin Danher and was rated as amber. (See the full EA document for further details)

## 7 Monitoring Performance

This policy's effectiveness will be measured using the performance indicator of customer feedback and complaints.

## 8 Scheme of Delegation

The responsible authority for approving this policy is ELT and was approved on 17 August 2022.

The Responsible Director for formulating this policy and ensuring its effective implementation is Communities Director.

The Responsible officer for reviewing and monitoring the implementation and performance against this policy is Community Safety & Response Team Manager.

## 9 Policy Review

The policy will be reviewed every 3 years or earlier if deemed necessary though the performance monitoring process.

## 10 Amendment Log

Highlight any changes to existing policies that have been reviewed to provide effective version control and easy access to reviewed policies with only minor amendments.

Date of revision:	Record of amendments:	Reason for revision:
11.08.22	<i>Fundamental rewrite following customer consultation and social housing white paper</i>	<i>Review of policy to ensure alignment with social housing white paper Removal of blanket bans on dogs and cats.</i>

