



Pet Policy

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Sponsor	Assistant Director of Housing
Date Agreed	September 2027
Review date	September 2030 (earlier if law or guidance changes)
Legislation	• Renters' Rights Act 2025, section 11 • Animal Welfare Act 2006 • Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 and 2026 • Microchipping of Cats and Dogs (England) Regulations 2023

This policy sets out how South Yorkshire Housing Association will consider requests to keep pets, the responsibilities of customers, and the limited circumstances in which permission will not be given.

1. Purpose and principles

SYHA recognises that pets can provide companionship, reduce loneliness and support wellbeing. We will balance these benefits with animal welfare, safety and the proper management of our homes. We will:

- consider every request clearly, promptly and on it's individual facts;
- not unreasonably withhold permission where the pet and home are suitable
- make reasonable adjustments for disabled residents and treat assistance-animal requests separately

- give written reasons for refusal
- respond proportionately to nuisance, damage, welfare concerns or danger.

2. Scope

This policy applies to SYHA General Needs tenants. Supported Housing, Leaseholders and shared owners should refer to their lease/project/service arrangements. Where the lease conflicts with this policy, the lease will normally take precedence.

3. Permission and applications

Customers must obtain written permission before keeping a dog or cat, an unusual or exotic species, and more than a reasonable number of small animals.

Applications should provide the animal's species, breed or type, age and microchip details where legally required. SYHA will only ask for information reasonably needed to decide the request.

Permission for alterations to your home, e.g. cat flaps, reinforcement of fencing and external structures, should have written permission.

If a member of SYHA staff or one of our contractors visits the home, the customer agrees to place their pet securely in another room.

SYHA will respond in writing to the request by letter or email within 28 days.

4. How decisions will be made

SYHA will consider the following factors and whether reasonable conditions could manage any identified risk:

- the animal's type, size, number(s) and welfare needs;
- the home's size, layout, shared areas and outdoor access;
- potential effects on neighbours, communal services, fire safety and hygiene;

5. When permission will not be given

Permission will be refused only where one or more of the following grounds applies:

- **Prohibited dog types:** A prohibited dog type does not have a valid Certificate of Exemption or is banned.
- **Dangerous or unsuitable animals:** The animal presents a serious, evidenced and unmanageable risk, or is a dangerous wild animal that cannot lawfully or safely be kept in the home.
- **Unsuitable accommodation:** The specific home cannot meet the animal's welfare needs or creates an unacceptable structural, fire, hygiene risk.
- **Serious nuisance or behaviour:** There is credible evidence of attacks, serious aggression, persistent excessive noise, fouling, uncontrolled behaviour or damage that reasonable controls are unlikely to manage.

- **Animal welfare:** The proposed arrangements would not meet the animal's welfare needs.
- **Binding property restriction:** A superior lease, title, planning or statutory restriction prevents the animal and SYHA cannot reasonably obtain consent or a waiver.
- **Excessive numbers:** The number or mix of animals would be unsuitable for the property.
- **Commercial activity:** The request involves breeding, boarding, selling or another animal-related business that is unlawful, unlicensed, likely to cause nuisance or prohibited under SYHA's home-business requirements.

6. Assistance animals and equality

SYHA will treat a request for assistance animal as a potential reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010. An assistance animal will not be refused simply because a scheme is normally pet-free, the resident has no private garden, or another person expresses a general fear. SYHA will assess actual risks and explore practical solutions. Illegal ownership, serious, unmanaged danger or fundamental welfare concerns may still justify refusal.

7. Conditions and resident responsibilities

Permission may be subject to reasonable and relevant conditions. Residents must:

- meet animal-welfare, microchipping, registration and control requirements;
- keep the animal under control and appropriately supervised in communal areas;
- remove fouling promptly and prevent persistent noise, odour, infestation or nuisance;
- prevent and pay for pet-related damage, subject to fair-wear-and-tear principles;
- arrange suitable care during absence, hospital admission or emergencies;
- make pets safe or secure when staff and contractors need access;
- seek permission before adding or replacing an animal or installing pet-related structures;
- comply with every licence or Certificate of Exemption condition.

8. Complaints, nuisance and enforcement

Permission may be reviewed or withdrawn following serious or repeated breaches, substantiated danger or nuisance, illegal ownership, unresolved welfare concerns, or loss of a required licence or exemption. Except in an emergency, SYHA will explain the concern, allow the resident to respond, consider equality and safeguarding issues, and give a reasonable opportunity to resolve the problem.

9. Existing unauthorised pets

Residents with an existing unauthorised pet will normally be invited to make a retrospective application. The application will not be refused solely because the pet was obtained before permission was requested. Where permission cannot be given, SYHA will

explain why and normally allow a reasonable period for alternative arrangements, unless urgent action is required.

10. Reviews and complaints

A refusal will identify the evidence, policy ground and reason conditions or adjustments would not manage the concern. It will also explain whether further information could change the decision.