



Responsible Pet Ownership

Approved by SMT on 14 July 2021



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1 Introduction

- 1.1. Our vision is a Scotland where people of all ages are respected can make their own choices and lead independent and fulfilling lives.
- 1.2. Our mission is to improve the quality of life of older people by offering a diverse range of housing, care, and other services.
- 1.3. We aim to provide all tenants with the peaceful enjoyment of their homes and the immediate surrounding environment.
- 1.4. We also recognise that many people benefit considerably from the companionship that a pet provides. We are therefore happy for our tenants to keep a pet provided that they do so responsibly.
- 1.5. However, tenants who do not keep control over their household pets can impinge upon the peace and enjoyment of other tenants and can cause property damage.
- 1.6. Our Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement (SST) sets out tenants' responsibilities in respect of their pets in Section 2.6.
- 1.7. This policy embodies our values, which are:

Honesty
Dignity

Equality and Diversity
Integrity

Ambition
Caring

Kindness

2. Policy Outcomes

- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to:
 - Provide clarity on our approach to granting permission to keep a pet and the responsibilities of pet owners for our customers, colleagues, and Board members
- 2.2. By doing this we want to make sure that domestic pets do not cause a nuisance to other tenants and visitors to their home, and do not cause the physical environment within developments to deteriorate.
- 2.3. You are encouraged to be mindful of the sensitivities and vulnerabilities of people who may be trauma survivors and the presence of their pet is linked with their coping strategies. In practical terms, this means being respectful, acknowledging, and understanding.

3. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

- 3.1. When carrying out this policy we will adhere to our Equality and Diversity Policy which aims to promote diversity, fairness, social justice, and equality of opportunity. An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out concerning this policy and this is included in [Appendix 1](#).
- 3.2. One of the key impacts identified was the potential for some Bield tenants to be worried that if they are no longer able to care for or control their pets they may be forced to give them up.
- 3.3. To help mitigate this risk the proposed action was to provide written information on responsible pet ownership to help demonstrate that Bield understands the importance of pets to their owners. Information on responsible pet ownership will be made available online and will be included in correspondence granting permission for pet ownership.
- 3.4. In addition to the points made above, to help promote equality and inclusion, the following steps will be taken for this policy:



- Large print version
- Translation and interpretation message on the back of the policy
- Easy to read version for people with mental impairment

4. Definitions

4.1. For this Policy, a domestic pet is defined as:

- Dog (excluding any dog prohibited by the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991)
- Cat;
- Domesticated bird (excluding pigeons and birds of prey);
- Small domesticated rodent (e.g. rabbit, hamster, gerbil, guinea pig, mouse);
- Small reptile or amphibian kept in a terrarium (e.g. terrapin, tortoise, and lizard).

4.2. This list is not exhaustive and you should discuss any other domestic pets you would like permission to keep with a member of staff.

5. Conditions for keeping a domestic pet

5.1. Tenants are required to apply online or in writing for permission to keep a pet.
See Responsible Pet Procedures for detail on this should be processed.

5.2. If permission is granted, the tenant will be informed in writing.

5.3. In addition, tenants are also required to sign a Pet Ownership Code of Conduct.

5.4. Permission to keep a domestic pet is only granted provided the following conditions are met:

- Keeping the pet is not prohibited by the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, or by any other law;
- The tenant is responsible for the care and behaviour of a pet owned by them or anyone living with them;
- The tenant must take all reasonable steps to supervise and keep any pet under control and ensure the pet is not left unattended in common or open areas;
- Dogs must always be accompanied out with the tenants' own home and kept on a short lead in all common areas, grounds, and shared gardens;
- The tenant is responsible for removing and cleaning up dog and cat faeces and other animal excreta;
- The tenant must take all reasonable steps to prevent a pet from causing a nuisance, annoyance, or danger to their neighbours. This includes fouling or noise or smell from the pet;
- The tenant must take reasonable care to see that a pet does not foul or cause damage to the house, their neighbour's property, anything belonging to Bield, or anything we are responsible for, such as common parts;
- The tenant must not breed animals. If a tenant's domestic pet gives birth, then the tenant will be given a maximum of 3 months to find alternative homes for the animals;
- The tenant must agree to remove the pet from the property if the tenant should become permanently unable (through disability or ill health) to care adequately for the pet;
- The tenant must provide details of a nominated person who can care for the pet if the tenant becomes temporarily unwell or otherwise unable to care for the pet;
- The tenant must sign our formal agreement on keeping pets.

5.5. To comply with current legislation, dogs must wear a collar and tag. Tenants are required to comply with the conditions of the Microchipping of Dogs (Scotland) Regulations 2016 which requires every keeper of a dog that is over the age of eight weeks to ensure it is microchipped.



6. Pets that do not require permission

6.1. We have taken the view that smaller pets kept in small numbers are less likely to be a source of nuisance therefore there is no need to apply for formal permission for those listed below.

6.2. Prior written permission from us is not necessary for:-

- Fish, reptiles, or amphibians which can be kept in one tank with a capacity of less than 21 litres.
- Small domesticated rodents such as rats, gerbils, chinchillas, guinea pigs, rabbits, and hamsters where no more than one pair will be kept.
- Small domesticated birds such as parrots, cockatiels, finches, canaries, budgerigars, and macaws as long as no more than one pair is kept.
- If any pets breed it is expected that either the adults or the offspring will be removed once the offspring are independent/weaned so that you still have only one pair of the animals concerned. If tenants decide to keep the offspring then an application for permission must be made because of the increase in numbers.

7. Animals not allowed

7.1. To help keep everyone safe, and to safeguard animal safety, permission will not be granted for the following animals:

- Any mammal, bird, or invertebrate that requires a license under The Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976, The Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, and subsequent amendments of these acts.
- Any hybrid (a hybrid dog is not a breed, it is a mix of more than one purebred dog) of domestic dog and those identified in the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 that requires licensing.
- Further to this, Section 1 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 prohibits four types of dog:
 - Pit Bull Terrier
 - Japanese Tosa
 - Dogo Argentino
 - Fila Brasileiro

It is a criminal offence for a dog owner to be in possession or custody of any of the listed dogs unless a certificate of exemption is in force.

- Any giant or huge dogs e.g. Irish Wolfhound
- Any hybrid of a domestic cat and those identified in the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 that requires licensing.
- Any type of farm animals e.g. chickens, goats, pigs.
- Any type of bird of prey e.g. Kestrel, buzzard, owls.
- Primates including all species of Monkeys.
- Any animal that requires external kennels, runs, and aviaries, with the exception of guide dogs.
- Horses or ponies.



8. What we will take into account when assessing the application

8.1. We will not refuse the request without good reason.

8.2. Applications will be assessed using the following criteria:

- Any potential for disturbance, nuisance, or distress that the pet may cause to neighbours
- The size and type of accommodation where the pet is to be kept
- The number and type of pets already in the property
- Any history of pet-related problems within the property or within the relevant locality
- Whether you have had pets before and have been unable to look after them properly without causing a nuisance or annoyance to others.
- Any title conditions applicable to the property or within the relevant locality
- Whether the pet will be kept for breeding purposes

8.3. In all cases, we will balance the right to keep a pet against the right of other tenants and occupiers not to be disturbed, distressed, or annoyed by the pet.

Timescales for decisions

8.4. Tenants will normally receive a decision in writing within 28 days of our receipt of the written application and this will contain any conditions attached to such permission or reasons for its refusal.

8.5. Tenants do not have a legal right to keep pets therefore if we are unable to give a decision within 28 days, the tenant will be written to make them aware of the reasons why. Failing to provide permission within the timescale does not represent tacit permission, and tenants should not proceed without our permission.

Appeals

8.6. Customers who have their application declined can appeal the decision within 14 days.

8.7. The appeal will be considered by the Operational Head of Service within 14 days of receiving the decision.

8.8. The decision of the Operational Head of Service will be final.

9. Applicants

9.1. All applicants will be advised of the Pet Policy at the time of making an application for housing, and again should an offer of housing be made.

10. Breach of Conditions

10.1. We may reconsider our permission for a tenant to keep a domestic pet if it appears that:

- Permission has not been sought or it has been refused;
- any of the conditions set out in this policy are being breached;
- the keeping of the pet is causing a nuisance to anyone in the neighbourhood;
- the keeping of the pet is causing property damage.

10.2. The following constitutes nuisance and annoyance:

- (a) Excessive noise confirmed by the local authority noise team.
- (b) Roaming and unattended animals
- (c) Fouling in common areas
- (d) Fouling in gardens (including tenants own garden, if not removed)
- (e) Destruction to neighbouring gardens
- (f) Aggression



- (g) Neglect
- (h) Odour

- 10.3. The above list is not exhaustive. We reserve the right to require the removal of pet(s) in other reasonable circumstances.
- 10.4. Where we receive complaints regarding the keeping and or supervision of animals, the tenant may be required to rehome their pet if the complaints are consistent and justifiable.
- 10.5. If it has been found that a tenant has neglected a pet's welfare, or mistreated or caused unnecessary suffering to a pet, we will notify the appropriate authorities. Where this is brought to our attention by a third party, then they will be advised to also report it to the appropriate authorities.
- 10.6. In such cases, permission to keep a pet may be withdrawn.

11. Pets and eviction or abandonment

- 11.1. If a tenant is being evicted, every effort will be made to determine the presence of a pet(s) and ensure the tenant has made suitable arrangements for them. However, if pets are found to have been left behind in a property, we will contact the appropriate authorities to arrange for their safe removal and care.
- 11.2. The same action will apply in the case of an abandoned tenancy.
- 11.3. The Board will be consulted on any legal action and a decision will be taken on what course of action to be taken which could include:
 - To remove the pet by 'specific implement'
 - To remove the tenant

12. Publication

- 12.1. This policy will be made available on the Bield website and intranet.
- 12.2. We are happy to translate any of our policies and provide an interpreter if our customers need help.

13. Training and Competence

- 13.1. Relevant colleagues will be required to read and understand the policy and process.

14. Scheme of Delegation

- 14.1. The Chief Executive and senior management team provide leadership and direction in ways that guide and enable us to perform effectively across all services.
- 14.2. This includes ensuring that there is an effective Pet Policy
- 14.3. Operational Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring that the policy is understood by relevant colleagues and presiding over appeals of decisions.
- 14.4. Area managers are responsible for assessing the applications for pet ownership and providing the relevant letters and conditions of ownership as well as dealing with breaches of the policy.



- 14.5. Local managers are responsible for assisting tenants to understand the need for permission and how to apply for permission if required.

15. Monitoring, Reporting, and Review

- 15.1. The Pet Policy will be reviewed on a five-yearly basis. The purpose of the review will be to assess the policy's effectiveness in meeting customer and organisational needs.
- 15.2. As part of this policy review, a consultation will take place with both colleagues and customers to ensure operational issues and the opinions of tenants are taken into account.

16. Complying with the Law and Good Practice

- 16.1. The legislative and regulatory framework that has influenced this policy includes:
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
Specifies a tenant's right to be informed about the terms of their tenancy.
 - Dangerous Dog Act 1991 and the Control of Dogs Order 1992
Makes it an offence to keep specific breeds of dogs, and must be taken into account when granting permission to a tenant to keep a dog.
 - The Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
Ensures that where private individuals keep dangerous wild animals they do so in circumstances that create no risk to the public and safeguard the welfare of the animals. Licences are required from the local authority for any animal which appears on a schedule to the Act
 - Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 section 48
Makes it an offence to allow a dog to foul a footpath, local authority grass verge, a local authority pedestrian precinct, and any local authority maintained recreation or sports ground. The fine is up to £500.
 - The Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006
Introduced the concept of a 'duty of care', which means that people are legally obliged to ensure the welfare of the animals in their care. Although any pet would not be in the direct care of the Association itself, this act will inform the conditions it lays down for tenants owning a pet, and the circumstances under which permission may be withdrawn, or further action taken.
 - The Microchipping of Dogs (Scotland) Regulations 2016
Introduced a requirement that all dogs over eight weeks old must be microchipped and have their details registered on a compliant database
- 16.2. As a Registered Social Landlord (RSL), we are regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). The SHR's statutory objective is to safeguard and promote the interests of current and future tenants, homeless people, and other people who use services provided by social landlords. In developing our policy, we have taken account of good practice, including that developed by the Scottish Housing Regulator.
- 16.3. The SHR uses the outcomes and standards in the Charter to assess the performance of social landlords. The key outcomes that have been considered in the development of this policy are
- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Outcome 1 | Customers have their individual needs recognised, are treated fairly and with respect, and receive fair access to housing and housing services. |
|-----------|---|



Outcome 6 Customers' live in well-maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe

16.4. As a provider of care, we are regulated by the Care Inspectorate. The Care Inspectorate uses Health and Social Care Standards to assess the performance of care providers. The key standards that have been considered in the development of this policy are: [delete as appropriate]

Standard 4 I have confidence in the organisation providing my care and support

17. GDPR

17.1. We will treat all personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection regulations and our Privacy Policy. Information regarding how all data will be used and the basis for processing your data is provided in our Customer Fair Processing Notice.

18. Sustainability statement

18.1. We will work in a way that

- reduces the need for resources and travel
- uses renewal energy when possible

19. Risk management

19.1. Several risk management activities have been identified to ensure this policy is adhered to and that Bield customers experience the best possible experience

- Bield colleagues, Board members, and volunteers are made aware of this policy on publication and during induction of new colleagues.
- Customers and carers are made aware of this policy during service entry.



Appendix 1 Equality Impact Assessment

1	Title of Policy to be assessed: Pet policy
2	Date: 29/03/21
3	Lead Officer/Manager: Zhan McIntyre
4	EQIA Team (who will be involved): N/A
5	Director/Manager: Diana MacLean
6	Is the function or policy existing, new, or review: Review
7	<p>Set out the aims/objectives/purposes/outcomes of the function or policy, and give a summary of the service provided:</p> <p>The purpose of this policy is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clarity on our approach to granting permission to keep a pet and the responsibilities of pet owners for our customers, colleagues, and Board members <p>By doing this we want to make sure that domestic pets do not cause a nuisance to other tenants and visitors to their home, and do not cause the physical environment within developments to deteriorate.</p>
7a	Who should benefit from the policy (target population): Tenants with pets and tenants with no pets.
7b	Linked policies, functions: Are there any other functions, policies or services, which might be linked with this one for this exercise? Please list.
8	<p>State whether the policy will have a positive or negative impact across the following factors and provide initial comments/observations.</p> <p>Age: Older people, people in the middle years, young people, and children.</p> <p>Disability: includes physical disability, learning disability, sensory impairment, long-term medical conditions, mental health problems.</p> <p>Maternity and civil partnership The policy will have no impact on people expecting or recently giving birth or within a civil partnership</p> <p>Race: Minority ethnic people (includes Gypsy/Travellers, non-English speakers).</p> <p>Religion or belief: includes people with no religion or belief.</p> <p>Sex: Women, men, and transgender people (include issues relating to pregnancy and maternity).</p> <p>Gender reassignment: The process of changing or transitioning from one gender to another.</p> <p>Sexual orientation: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual people.</p> <p>People in remote, rural, and/or island locations</p> <p>People in different work patterns: e.g. part-/full-time, short-term, job share, seasonal</p> <p>People who have low literacy</p> <p>People in different socio-economic groups (includes those living in poverty/people on a low income)</p>



	Population groups	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Comments
	Age	Positive – long term	Small – short term	<p>A clear policy about when a tenant is not permitted to keep a pet will have a positive impact on Bield tenants who experience nuisance from pet owners that are not able to keep their pets under control.</p> <p>Tenants who are no longer able to control or care for their pets may feel afraid that they may be forced to give their pets up.</p>
	Disability	N/A	N/A	
	Maternity and civil partnership	N/A	N/A	
	Race	N/A	N/A	
	Religion or belief	N/A	N/A	
	Sex and Gender reassignment	N/A	N/A	
	Sexual orientation	N/A	N/A	
	People in remote, rural, and/or island locations	N/A	N/A	
	People in different work patterns	N/A	N/A	
	People who have low literacy	N/A	N/A	
	People in different socio-economic groups	N/A	N/A	
9	<p>What evidence do you have for the statements you have made above? Focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs and experiences; N/A Uptake of services; N/A Complaints; N/A Levels of participation. N/A 			
10	<p>From the evidence set out what actions, if any, will you take where the negative impact has been identified:</p>			
	Population groups	Proposed action	How will it address the negative impact?	



Age	Information on responsible pet ownership	Demonstrate that Bield understands the importance of pets to their owners and we wish to support people with responsible pet ownership.
Disability:	N/A	N/A
Maternity and civil partnership	N/A	N/A
Race	N/A	N/A
Religion or belief	N/A	N/A
Sex and Gender reassignment	N/A	N/A
Sexual orientation	N/A	N/A
People in remote, rural, and/or island locations	N/A	N/A
People in different work patterns	N/A	N/A
People who have low literacy	N/A	N/A
People in different socio-economic groups	N/A	N/A
<p>Briefly explain how the policy contributes to our equality and diversity values by answering the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will it provide equality of access to services, information, and employment? • Does it or could it celebrate diversity? • Will it or could it promote good relationships within and between communities? • How will it provide good quality, inclusive services? <p>N/A</p>		
<p>Any additional information, questions, or actions required? Please explain.</p>		
<p>Sign off: As Director I am satisfied with the results of this EIA The findings will be referred to within Service Plans and target set. The Action Plan will be reviewed annually within Business planning reporting.</p> <p>Signature: _____ Date: _____</p>		



Speaking your language - we are happy to translate our policies on request.

يمكن ترجمة سياساتنا عند الطلب
إذا كنت بحاجة إلى مساعدة ، فيمكننا توفير مترجم

**Nasze zasady mogą być przetłumaczone na żądanie.
Jeśli potrzebujesz pomocy, możemy zapewnić tłumacza**

**我们的政策可以应要求翻译。
如果您需要帮助，我们可以提供翻译**

ہماری پالیسی کا درخواست پر ترجمہ کیا جاسکتا ہے۔
اگر آپ کو مدد کی ضرورت ہو تو ہم ایک ترجمان فراہم
کرسکتے ہیں

