

## **HELP SHEET: PETS**

Owning a pet is very important to many people who live in our properties. 'Pets add life' is one of our slogans! We are told that pets help to reduce stress, help to prevent heart disease and lower blood pressure, help to fight depression but above all, pets add joy and health.

In recognition of our recently updated Pet Friendly Policy in October 2011, Hanover was awarded a prestigious Silver Footprint award in the RSPCA's Community Animal Welfare Footprint Scheme. The RSPCA Footprint scheme seeks to promote good practice in animal welfare by local authorities and housing providers.

### **Our approach**

Hanover is positive about residents keeping pets – not just cats and dogs but rabbits, hamsters, budgies, fish and even snakes as well. Pets come in all shapes and sizes (and sometimes come in pairs or groups). Whatever your pet, Hanover will consider whether your pet can be housed safely and responsibly, without inconvenience to other residents on your estate

Hanover encourages and supports responsible pet ownership amongst residents and works to ensure that residents can easily obtain consent to keep a pet in their home, subject to reasonable terms.

All pets need to be approved, even pets such as goldfish or insects, so if you are thinking about getting a pet, tell us in advance and we will ask you to complete a Pet Care request form. There are certain terms and conditions relating to responsible pet ownership which apply to all approved pets and we will also tell you about any Local Agreements concerning pets on your estate.

There should be no Local Agreements which state that pets are not welcome, except on a very small number of homeownership estates where the lease specifies this.

### **Homeownership estates**

For those who buy a property from Hanover we must have regard to what the lease says about keeping pets;

- If the lease states that no pets are allowed, regretfully we cannot give consent for a pet, except where a resident requires a pet due to a disability (Disability Discrimination Act 2005). However, residents on such estates may agree that Hanover should not enforce a 'no pets' clause via their Local Agreement.
- If the lease is silent or says pets are permitted, we will consider requests positively

### **Rented estates**

- Applicants who wish to rent a property from us will need to advise us on the application form whether

there are any pets to re-house. As part of our waiting list management arrangements, our Estate Manager will discuss the type of pet that the applicant has and whether that pet would be suitable for keeping on the estate.

### **Applying for consent to keep a pet**

All applicants for housing as well as existing residents, including those wishing to replace a pet, will need to apply for consent to keep a pet. You will need to put your request in writing to your Estate Manager. If you do not have an Estate Manager, please talk to your Housing Manager.

All requests must be accompanied by a signed Pet Care request form (Appendix A)

### **Criteria that we will apply**

When managed responsibly pet ownership should not cause any inconvenience to other residents.

Our policy is not rigid regarding the type or number of pets that a resident may keep within their home. In some instances, it may be appropriate to own more than one pet. Every application will be individually assessed. Consent will be reviewed in line with what can be sensibly managed and will work on the estate.

## Terms of the consent

Unless specific conditions are agreed with residents via the Local Agreement, the main terms and conditions imposed on Hanover residents who are allowed to keep pets are that:

- any pet within a Hanover property must be registered with a local vet (with the exception of budgies and fish)
- the pet will not be the subject of any breeding or business activity from the property
- the owner must comply with the main terms of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 which are *A proper diet, protection from pain, suffering, injury or disease, the ability to exhibit normal behaviour patterns, a suitable environment to live in with or apart from other animals*
- dogs are walked away from the estate and kept on a lead at all times within the communal parts of the estate and estate grounds
- the resident does not allow the pet to wander corridors or hallways within the estate
- with the exception of house cats who never leave the property, cats must have access to the outside – this may be by the resident carrying their cat to the main door and collecting them upon their return or through a window or patio door and be provided with a litter tray in the resident's home (at least one per cat) which is emptied regularly. Used litter should be

securely bagged before being placed within any communal bins.

- the pet is house trained and must not be permitted to foul communal areas at any time. If an incident of fouling occurs the owner must clean the mess immediately.
- subject to specific consent, Hanover may give permission for a cat flap to be fitted in a resident's own door to the exterior (not in a communal door to the exterior). In these circumstances, when a resident vacates the property the cat flap may be left in place as long as it can be securely locked. In certain circumstances, permission may be given for a cat flap to be fitted in a window. In these circumstances, the resident would be required to remove the cat flap and reinstate the window when the property is vacated.
- the pet does not create any exceptional noise issues – beyond normal day to day levels
- in the case of exotic species relevant licences must be held and Hanover must be satisfied with the security of the animal.
- all owners are asked to consider identification and neutering for their pet. Further advice on both these aspects of pet care can be obtained from a vet. Dogs and cats should have a collar with ownership details in case they are lost.
- the owner completes a Pet Care request form (Appendix A)

## **Refusing or Withdrawing Consent**

Very occasionally we may refuse permission to keep a pet or we may have to withdraw consent to keep a pet. This will be in exceptional circumstances and we will always discuss this with you.

We will work with local welfare groups to support residents to keep their pet where this would prove helpful. Where keeping a pet is causing disturbance to other residents at an estate, we will act to ensure problems are resolved as quickly as possible.

Any refusals are closely monitored by senior housing staff. In the very rare event that a resident or applicant is advised that they cannot keep an existing pet, the Estate Manager will work with the resident or applicant to identify any animal welfare agencies who can assist in placing the pet in a new home. We recognise that this can be an extremely traumatic time and will deal with the matter sensitively.

## **Right of appeal**

In the event that a resident or applicant has been refused permission to keep a pet and they wish to appeal against this decision they should write to the Head of Housing with the details of the case.

## **Visiting pets**

Friends or relatives may come to visit you and bring their pets with them. Visiting pets are welcome but are expected to keep to the same estate rules and Terms of Consent that are required of residents who have pets at the estate.



## Appendix A

### PET CARE REQUEST FORM

I have considered the terms detailed below and I agree to the relevant clauses. The name and type of the pet that I wish to keep is:

.....

- any pet within a Hanover property must be registered with a local vet (with the exception of budgies and fish)
- the pet will not be the subject of any breeding or business activity from the property
- the owner must comply with the main terms of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 which are *A proper diet, protection from pain, suffering, injury or disease, the ability to exhibit normal behaviour patterns, a suitable environment to live in with or apart from other animals*
- dogs are walked away from the estate and kept on a lead at all times within the communal parts of the estate and the estate grounds
- the resident does not allow the pet to wander corridors or hallways within the estate
- with the exception of house cats who never leave the property cats must have external access to the outside – this may be by the resident carrying their cat to the main door and collecting them upon their return or through a window or patio door and be provided with a litter tray in the resident's home (at least one per cat) which is emptied regularly. Used

litter should be securely bagged before being placed within any communal bins.

- the pet is house trained and must not be permitted to foul communal areas at any time if an incident of fouling occurs the owner must clean the mess immediately.
- subject to specific consent, Hanover may give permission for a cat flap to be fitted in a resident's own door to the exterior (not in a communal door to the exterior). In these circumstances, when a resident vacates the property the cat flap may be left in place as long as it can be securely locked. In certain circumstances, permission may be given for a cat flap to be fitted in a window. In these circumstances, the resident would be required to remove the cat flap and reinstate the window when the property is vacated.
- the pet does not create any exceptional noise issues – beyond normal day to day levels
- in the case of exotic species relevant [licences](#) must be held and Hanover must be satisfied with the security of the animal.
- all owners are asked to consider identification and neutering for their pet, further advice on both these aspects of pet care can be obtained from a vet. dogs and cats should have a collar with ownership details in case they are lost.
- the owner has returned to the Estate Manager [a Pet Care request form](#)



## PET CARE REQUEST FORM

On admittance to hospital or otherwise unable to look after my pet, I would like the following person to be contacted if at all possible to take care of my pet.

<b>NAME OF TEMPORARY PET CARER</b>	
<b>ADDRESS</b>	
<b>TELEPHONE No</b>	
<b>PET'S NAME</b>	
<b>TYPE OF PET/BREED</b>	
<b>AGE OF PET</b>	
<b>PREFERENCES</b> e.g. house-trained/ food preferences/ medication/health problems	
<b>HANOVER RESIDENT'S NAME</b>	
<b>ADDRESS</b>	
<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

To be completed and given to your Estate Manager