

Policy Name	Pets Policy
Version No.	3.1
Approval Date	March 2023
Category	Operational
Classification	Internal

Pets Policy	
Author	Richard Keeley – Housing & Resident Engagement Manager
Contributors	Location Managers, Resident Forum reps
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Version Control

Version	Date	Description	Updated By	Approved By
3	11/10/22	Fully revised policy to replace version 2 (2015)	RK	JG / Exec Director Ops
3.1	14/02/23	Minor updates to include reference to Pet Application / Risk Assessment	RK	JG / Exec Director Ops



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1. Policy Purpose & Aim

The ExtraCare Charitable Trust (ExtraCare) are committed to delivering our vision – ‘Better Lives for Older People’. As part of this commitment, we recognise the value that pets play in older people’s lives – for companionship, routine and exercise. We are committed to our retirement communities being pet-friendly, as we recognise the importance that pet ownership can play in improving the health and wellbeing of older people.

This aim of this Policy is to ensure that we help meet this commitment, whilst ensuring that we meet our obligations to ensure those with a pet can care for it; arrangements are in place for the pet if the resident is unable to care for it; and that the pet does not cause – or likely to cause - a nuisance to others within our retirement communities. The pet must be appropriate for a retirement community setting.

Our Policy is that we will look to give permission for **one pet** (most commonly meaning one cat or one dog) to all incoming residents after the approval date of this Policy, being October 2022. For all existing residents living in an ExtraCare retirement community who have had approval for more than one pet under the previous pet policy, we will not give permission for replacement pets if that will exceed the ‘one-pet’ policy.

We will re-assess the permission given for a pet on an annual basis (or sooner if there is an issue raised with us). This is to ensure that the conditions attached to our permission continue to be complied with.

We will apply reasonable and appropriate discretion in the implementation of this policy, meaning that if there is specific reason to grant permission for more than one pet, then the location manager may apply such discretion on a case-by-case basis. However, any such permission would be exceptional and on the basis that any additional pet is not replaced.

2. Objectives

The objectives of this Policy are to:

- Set out a clear statement of how a resident may seek consent to keep a pet
- Ensure that pets living within our locations are appropriately cared for, and do not cause a nuisance, annoyance or distress to others living, working or visiting our retirement communities



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- Ensure that visitors to our retirement communities who bring a pet with them (e.g. family) keep the pet under control and do not take the pet into areas restricted by the location
- Ensure that reasonable consideration is given to all pet requests, and to provide clear reasons when we may refuse permission for a pet
- Ensure that residents granted permission to keep a pet understand that such permission may be revoked at a future date should the pets cause a nuisance or annoyance to others, and that they understand that – in such circumstances – the pet in question will need to be re-homed
- To provide the basis of reaching a ‘one – pet’ policy for all, across our locations over time to ensure equity and fairness to all residents

3. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to ExtraCare’s residents, relatives, visitors and other customers. It applies to anyone living, working or visiting any of our retirement communities.

4. Responsibilities

Executive Leadership Team	Responsible for approving Policy and any subsequent updates or reviews
Regional Operations Managers	Ensure the implementation of Policy across all ExtraCare retirement communities Consider appeals where permission for a pet has been refused
Location Managers	Ensure enactment of Policy by ensuring supporting documentation is completed in order to consider pet requests Assess areas within locations where pets may / may not be present, consult with residents as necessary, and ensure clear signage indicating pet / non-pet areas
Housing Officers	Assist Location Managers with the enforcement of the Policy for any resident / visitor who is not complying, both in terms of ‘the letter and the spirit’, with the Policy.



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Housing & Resident Engagement Manager	Consult with Resident Forum on any changes or revisions to the Policy
	Lead on rectifying serious or persistent breaches of the Policy

5. Monitoring & Review

This policy will be reviewed in three years to consider its effectiveness, or sooner if there are any material regulatory or legal changes. Regional Operations Managers will monitor the effectiveness of the Policy and forward any recommendations for changes to the Policy author – Housing & Resident Engagement Manager. Any changes will be consulted on with ExtraCare’s Resident Forum.

6. Risk Management

There is no regulatory or legal risk associated with this policy.

Adherence to this policy mitigates the risk of staff, resident, or other visitors being harmed or materially inconvenienced through encouraging responsible pet ownership. It provides a framework to ensure that pets are appropriately managed within locations, and to be provide fairness, equity and consistency across and within locations.

7. Statement of Commitment

ExtraCare recognises that its aims are at the core of its vision of “Better lives for older people”. This policy aligns with our value of transparency. We will commit to the Policy by ensuring that the Policy is available as a public document for all residents / potential residents to view; publicise the Policy to residents through Resident (‘Street’) Meetings; provide training to relevant staff including location managers; and Regional Operations Managers will ensure that the policy is appropriately implemented within locations.



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8. Additional arrangements

Our policy is to allow each household within our locations to be able to seek permission for up to one pet within that household. Our definition of a pet is a reasonable one: an animal that is tamed or domesticated and kept as a companion or treated with fondness. This will usually mean a cat, dog, caged animal / bird.

The Policy does not apply to fish in a tank / aquarium as permission is not required for this (unless it involves potential adaptations to the property). However, residents with fish should plan for their care in the event of hospitalisation / vacating the property. We will not accept any responsibility for fish in a tank left unattended for a time that puts them at risk.

We will generally grant permission for one pet only. Residents with more than one pet (where permission was granted prior to this Policy) will not be permitted to replace a pet when it passes away if that would result in exceeding the 'one-pet' policy. This is to be fair and equitable to all residents.

We may consider additional pets only where circumstances may allow it (such as the resident lives in a bungalow with a private garden; or where there may be a specific reason (such as resident welfare) for doing so, and where the granting of permission for more than one pet would not adversely impact on other residents. However, if permission for more than one pet is granted, then this will be considered an exception, and the pet should not be replaced at a future date.

We will re-assess permission given on an annual basis, through using the Pet Permission / Annual Risk Assessment form in the Annual Resident Visit to ensure that all conditions relating to the pet are being kept to, as listed below.

Residents

Residents (or applicants for housing with ExtraCare – both rental and leasehold) must seek permission from the location manager prior to moving a pet into the property. This will involve an application being completed, and a meeting / assessment by the location manager (or staff delegated by them) with the resident to assess the request.

Granting permission for a pet will be on condition of the following:

- The pet is appropriately cared for, and in the case of dogs is exercised regularly
- The pet does not cause a nuisance or annoyance to others and does not have the potential to do so (in the case of dogs this would include persistent barking, jumping up at others where this is not welcome)
- The owner clears up any mess left by the pet
- The pet (if dog / cat) wears a collar with name / address and is microchipped

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- In the case of dogs, that it is always kept on a short leash (no more than 1.2 metres / 4 ft) within the location (including external communal areas)
- That we are satisfied that the resident has appropriate arrangements in place for the pet to be cared for in the event of absence from the property (e.g. hospitalisation)
- That the pet is appropriately insured, and the owner has the ability to pay for veterinary bills if necessary
- That arrangements are in place for the pet if the resident passes away

In assessing whether to grant permission for a dog, we will refer to the Dogs Trust Guidance for Responsible Dog Ownership, using their most recent advice.

In assessing whether to grant permission for a cat, we will refer to Cats Protection Guidance on Responsible Cat Ownership, using their most recent advice.

In assessing whether to grant permission for another type of pet we will refer to any applicable expert advice relevant to that animal.

We will not grant permission for the following:

- Any dogs listed under the Dangerous Dogs Act, 1991
- Any dangerous animals, including venomous snakes
- Any animal that does not meet the definition of a pet
- Any animal that cannot be reasonably housed within a retirement community setting

We reserve the right to revoke permission for keeping a pet if any of the above is breached on a regular basis. Revoking permission means we will ask the owner to seek alternative housing / arrangements for the pet. We will give reasonable notice to allow for this (usually one calendar month).

If we revoke permission, and the pet is not removed at our request, then we will consider legal action for breach of tenancy or lease, under the terms contained within the relevant agreement.

We reserve the right to also pursue action under our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy if the pet is the cause or contributor to anti-social behaviour affecting other residents, staff or visitors (or people in the wider community).

We reserve the right to bill (invoice) any resident for damage caused to either the property or communal areas or furnishings caused by their pet, or a pet brought in to the location by one of their invited guests.



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Any works required by us to the residents' property or communal areas that may impact on the welfare of any pet would be for the resident to make suitable arrangements for the pet. We will not accept liability for any associated costs.

If the presence of a pet in an apartment would prevent us from carrying out required work to the property, prevent access to inspect the property or to meet with the resident, or prevent access for us to carry out our care service, then the resident should make appropriate arrangements for the pet to be temporarily removed for the duration that access is required.

We reserve the right not to enter the property if the resident fails to keep their pet under control or refuse to remove it temporarily at our request.

Visitors

Visitors to our locations are generally permitted to bring a pet (usually this will mean a dog). However, pets must be always kept under control (dogs on a short leash of 1.2 metres / 4 ft). Each location has the right to demark areas where pets are allowed / not allowed, to act in the best interests of the wider community. The location manager will consult with residents through resident ('street') meetings, or by other consultation means, in identifying these areas, and will be the arbiter of where these areas should be.

Visitors who do not keep their pets under control will be asked to leave the location.

Residents are responsible for the actions of their visitors, so if there are any on-going issues with residents' invited visitors in relation to pets, then we will seek to address this with the resident. We may then take action under our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

In relation to dogs, we will encourage assistance dogs within our locations. We will also encourage working dogs that provide therapeutic assistance to residents (e.g., 'reading dogs') to visit our locations.

Any disputes arising from the implementation of this Policy can be raised through ExtraCare's Complaints Policy.

We will provide locations with the means to assess pet requests, through an application form and references to the most applicable expert advice relating to responsible pet ownership (e.g., Dogs Trust, Cats Protection).

We will reassess permission through our Annual Resident Visits within locations.

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9. Other Relevant ExtraCare Policies & Documents

General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> https://www.extracare.org.uk/newsroom/blog/latest-posts/should-i-get-a-dog-in-retirement/ Resident Handbook
Related Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints Policy Anti-Social Behaviour Policy Acceptable Behaviour Policy
Work Instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Resident Visit Pet Permission Form / Annual Risk Assessment

10. Relevant Legislative & Regulatory Requirements

Legislation	Regulation	Guidance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dangerous Dogs Act, 1991 		Dogs Trust: https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/helpadvice/factsheets-downloads/dog10033%20-%20responsible%20dog%20owners%20booklet%20v5.1.pdf Cats Protection: https://www.cats.org.uk/help-andadvice/getting-a-cat/getting-a-cat